BOUNDARIES AND DOMINION

Volume 1

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AN ECONOMIC COMMENTARY ON LEVITICUS

Volume 1

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This book is dedicated to

R. C. Sproul

who was never one to rest on his a posteriori.

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FOREWORD

> *In the fall of 1991 I began a series of sermons on the first several chapters of Leviticus. My decision to preach on an obscure and difficult book (in the morning service, no less!) runs against the grain of contemporary pastoral theory. . . . Early on in my series, in fact, I spent most of one sermon explaining why a study of Leviticus is valuable for Christians. I am convinced that Leviticus is not only valuable but essential to a proper understanding of the New Testament. But anyone who preaches on Leviticus to an American congregation at the end of the twentieth century owes somebody an explanation.*
>
> PETER J. LEITHART[1]

The Book of Leviticus, more than any other biblical book, has kept readers from getting to the biblical books that follow it. Leviticus calls to mind the old Negro spiritual: "So high, you can't get over it; so low, you can't get under it; so wide you can't get around it." But we should recall the conclusion: "So, hear the word of the Lord." The problem is, Leviticus has to be taken as a unit. It is a very difficult book. Therefore, lots of people quit reading. Some make it through the five types of sacrifice. Others actually get through the consanguinity laws. But not many people finish the book. Many are called, but few are chosen.

Boundaries and Dominion is the full-length version of *Leviticus: An Economic Commentary*, which was published in hardback in 1994.[2] The digital version of this book initially served as a back-up for *Leviticus*, with more detailed arguments. It has now replaced it.

A. Why an Economic Commentary?

You may be thinking: "Why should anyone write an economic commentary on the Bible?" My answer: "Because there is no neutrality."

1. Peter J. Leithart, *The Kingdom and the Power: Rediscovering the Centrality of the Church* (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P&R Publishing, 1993), p. ix.
2. Gary North, *Leviticus: An Economic Commentary* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1994).

This is another way of saying that all knowledge is based on some view of morality, which in turn provides a concept of historical cause and effect. The Bible teaches that God brings positive sanctions in history to those who obey His law (Lev. 26:3–13). Our knowledge advances, individually and corporately, as we increase both our understanding of His law and our covenantal obedience to His law: *word and deed*. This is also the basis of our success in history, long term. But the modern church only rarely preaches this message.

The Bible speaks authoritatively in every area of life. This means that every area of life must be explored and then disciplined in terms of revelation in the Bible. We need specialized commentaries that apply biblical law to specific tasks: our occupations (jobs) and our callings (unique services) before God. As we study the Bible from the perspective of modern academic disciplines, we will increase our knowledge of the Bible and also these academic disciplines. We will gain insights that were unavailable to commentators in earlier eras. That is to say, *there is supposed to be intellectual and moral progress in history*. (Any widely heralded "biblical world-and-life view" that is not supported by detailed Bible commentaries on applied theology is either a sham or is in the very early development stage: a slogan rather than a reality.)

The church's knowledge of the Bible is not static. This is why we should expect biblical exegesis to improve as time moves forward. The church will become progressively more alert to the interaction of biblical texts with specialized knowledge in all fields of study, but especially those dealing with man and his institutions. As history advances, our knowledge regarding our personal and corporate responsibilities will increase. With greater knowledge always comes greater responsibility (Luke 12:47–48).[3]

This means that the church's knowledge of the Bible cannot remain static. Only by sealing off culture from biblical ethics could the church's knowledge of the Bible remain static. This is an impossible goal, for the ethics of the world that surrounds an ethically isolated, culturally defensive church eventually makes inroads into the thinking of its members. Ecclesiastical isolation is therefore an illegitimate goal. Nevertheless, a sealed-off church and a sealed-off external culture are the twin cultural goals of pietism.[4] *Pietists seek to place an ex-*

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3. Gary North, *Treasure and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Luke*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2000] 2012), ch. 28.

4. J. Gresham Machen, "Christianity and Culture," *Princeton Theological Review*, XI (1913), pp. 4–5.

egetical boundary around the arena of Christian responsibility. The narrower this boundary is, the pietist believes, the better.

This commentary is designed to show that the church as an institution and Christians as individuals have far more responsibility than Protestant pietistic churches have taught for over four centuries. More to the point, these responsibilities will grow over time. But God's grace in history will also grow over time. This is the meaning of progressive sanctification, both personally and corporately.

There are a lot of laws in Leviticus. As in the case of my previous commentaries, I ask two questions of each law that I consider: (1) How was this law applied in ancient Israel? (2) How should it be applied today, if at all? A few commentators ask the first question about a few Mosaic laws. Hardly anyone since the year 1700 has bothered to ask the second, let alone answer it clearly. The art of Christian casuistry faded: applying God's law to specific cases.

B. This Book Called Leviticus

In a humorous book about psychologically afflicted people who cannot resist buying books, especially used books—I am one of these people—the author provides a brief history of what book reviewing might have been like before the invention of the printing press. Here is how he imagines an early book industry report on the sales of Leviticus:

> Highly publicized diet book published under the title *Leviticus*. Sales flop. "Too many rules, too depressing, not enough variety, not enough attention to cholesterol," cry the critics. "And for crying out loud, give it a decent title."[5]

This parody is not too far from the opinion of the average reader who has started but not finished Leviticus. He sees it as a kind of "healthy living" diet book. It isn't.

Then what is Leviticus all about? It is a book about limits: *boundaries*. There are a lot of boundaries laid down in the Book of Leviticus. Some of these limits are liturgical. Others are familial. Some are tribal. Some are dietary. There are also limits that have to do with the status of the Promised Land as God's holy place of residence. Finally, a lot of these laws establish economic limits. I discuss these applications at considerable length, especially the economic ones. That is

5. Tom Raabe, *Biblioholism: The Literary Addiction* (Golden, Colorado: Fulcrum, 1991), p. 39.

why this commentary is even longer than Part 3 of my Exodus commentary, *Tools of Dominion*.

I offered several pages of reasons to justify the length of *Tools of Dominion* in its Introduction. I have adopted what I call a "fat book" strategy. A movement that seeks to change the world cannot make its claims believable with only short books. The world is much too large and much too complex to be capable of being restructured in terms of large-print, thin paperback books—the only kind of books that most Christians read these days. The best that any movement can expect to achieve if it publishes only short books is to persuade readers that the world cannot be changed.

C. Applying the Bible's Texts Today

I am writing for an audience that is not yet in existence. This nonexistent audience is the future leadership of Christianity. At some point, there will be an unprecedented Christian revival. The Holy Spirit will make His worldwide move.[6] Many will be called, and many will be chosen.[7] One of the results of this worldwide revival will be the revival of the ideal of **Christendom**: *the civilization (kingdom) of God in history*. Christianity will eventually possess sufficient judicial authority, by means of Christian candidates' popular election to political office or their appointment to judicial office, to begin to apply God's Bible-revealed laws to civil government. That victorious generation and the generations that will follow it will need a great deal more than a 200-page commentary. Those future generations will need many commentaries like this one: comprehensive within a specialized field of study. I want this commentary to become a model for those future commentaries in such fields as education, social theory, and political theory. Until such studies exist, and exist in profusion, Christianity will not be taken seriously as a religion with answers to the world's problems. Christianity will continue to be dismissed as simply one more experiment in mystical personal escape and well-organized fund-raising.

A short commentary that offers only conclusions is not going to be taken seriously as a book for restructuring economic theory and prac-

6. Kenneth L. Gentry, Jr., *He Shall Have Dominion: A Postmillennial Eschatology*, 2nd ed. (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, [1992] 1997).

7. Few have been chosen so far over the history of mankind's time on earth; this does not prove that few will be chosen in every generation. On the meaning of "few are chosen," see Gary North, *Priorities and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Matthew*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2000] 2012), ch. 40:D.

tice. Two hundred or so pages of brief conclusions can be dismissed as a list of unsubstantiated speculations. I wrote this large book in order to substantiate my opinions. A commentator should include reasons for his exclusions: why he rejected other possible interpretations and applications. He must show what he believes to be true, but he must also show clearly what he is *not* saying, so as to avoid confusion after he is dead and gone. This requires large commentaries. Those who are serious about understanding the Bible and then applying it to this world require books as large as this one. Those who are not equally serious are not my targeted audience. Besides, such people will not read a book this large.

Boundaries and Dominion does things that normal Bible commentaries seldom do. First, it applies biblical texts to the modern world—specifically, to economics and law. Second, it cites the opinions of non-Christians who have reached either similar or rival conclusions regarding the judicial issues that Leviticus deals with. Third, it offers examples from history about how societies have enforced or failed to enforce these laws, and what the results were. Fourth, it offers the logic and evidence that led to practical conclusions. The reader can evaluate for himself my reasoning process, law by law.

The Book of Leviticus is not understood by Christians, not obeyed by Jews, and not taken seriously by anyone else. For example, Christians do not understand the five Levitical sacrifices, Jews do not offer them, and everyone else thinks of them as archaic, barbaric, or both. Then there is the factor of the higher criticism of the Bible, which first began getting a hearing by a handful of New England scholars in the United States in the first half of the 1800s. But interest in higher criticism faded in New England during the Civil War (1861–65).[8] Then, independent of the moribund New England critical tradition, it revived in the mid-1870s and spread rapidly among German-educated American theologians.[9] Today, most of the very few scholars who pay attention to Leviticus adhere to the interpretive principles of higher criticism. They assume that the Old Testament is the product of several centuries of highly successful forgers.[10] I do not.

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8. Jerry Wayne Brown, *The Rise of Biblical Criticism in America, 1800–1870: The New England Scholars* (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1969), p. 8.

9. Thomas H. Olbricht, "Rhetoric in the Higher Criticism Controversy," in Paul H. Boase (ed.), *The Rhetoric of Protest and Reform, 1878–1898* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1980), p. 285; Walter F. Petersen, "American Protestantism and the Higher Criticism," *Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters*, L (1961), p. 321.

10. See Appendix I: "Conspiracy, Forgery, and Higher Criticism."

But the question remains: How should we interpret this difficult book? Are there principles of interpretation—a hermeneutic—that enable us to understand it correctly and apply it to our social problems?

1. Five Examples

There is more to the texts of Leviticus than meets the eye on first reading, or even second reading. The size of this commentary indicates just how much more. Let me offer the five Levitical sacrifices as examples. Here are a few one-sentence conclusions stemming from the five Levitical sacrifices. As you will see from these summaries, conclusions are not sufficient. Exegesis is required.

> **Whole Burnt Offering**. There are limits on man's sacrifice, yet a perfect sacrifice is required. There is no autonomy of possessions. God imposed an economic loss: a sacrifice. God's mercy requires sacrifice on the part of the recipient. There is a hierarchy of debt in life: I owe God; someone owes me; therefore, he owes God. These debt laws remain in force in the New Covenant.
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> **Meal Offering**. Being a priest adds to a man's responsibility. Authority is hierarchical. Leaven was prohibited on the altar: a symbol of completion in history. Salt was mandatory on the altar: a symbol of permanent destruction.
>
> **Peace Offering**. The peace offering was the premier boundary offering. Leaven was required. Eating fat was a blessing. Leaven, law, and dominion are linked. The peace offering was not the predecessor of the Lord's Supper. The peace offering was voluntary. The New Covenant is more rigorous than the Old Covenant. Offerings above the tithe are peace offerings.
>
> **Sin (Purification) Offering**. This sacrifice points to corporate responsibility. Priestly sins are the greatest threat to a biblically covenanted society. Biblical authority is through the people. This sacrifice mandated a theocratic republic. Modern political theory dismisses adultery as politically irrelevant. The church is more important than the state.
>
> **Guilt (Reparation) Offering**. The tithe is the equivalent of sharecropping. God favors private ownership. The free market pressures producers to count costs. God's economic sanctions are proportional to personal wealth.

I consider many other applications in chapters 1–7. Thirty chapters plus 9 appendixes follow these initial seven chapters. This is not the place to summarize all of them, but, as in the case of the five Levitical sacrifices, there are many practical applications that follow from these case laws. These applications are not intuitive. People who want to understand ancient Israel must become familiar with these

case laws and their applications. So do people who want to be faithful to God today.

2. A Question of Trust

Because I really do expect some parts of Leviticus to be applied to modern life some day, I could not adopt the standard commentator's implicit assurance to his readers: "Trust me." The stakes are too high. A serious reader of a serious subject should not be asked to take the author's word for anything. This rule applies to Bible commentaries. The author should be expected to spell out in detail both his reasoning and his evidence; conclusions alone are not sufficient. Only if a commentator expects nothing in a biblical text to be applicable in the real world should he expect his readers to trust him.

The problem is not simply that the reader has been asked previously to trust the commentators. He has also been told to distrust the Mosaic law. First, dispensational commentators have argued that the Mosaic law is in a kind of suspended animation until Jesus returns in person to establish His earthly millennial kingdom. This exclusion includes even the Ten Commandments.[11] Second, higher critics of the Bible for over two centuries have argued that the Pentateuch is unreliable judicially because Moses did not really write it; instead, lots of anonymous authors wrote it. Third, Protestant theologians for almost five centuries have denied that the Old Covenant provides moral and judicial standards for personal and corporate sanctification. Fourth, Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox theologians for a millennium and a half have substituted the legal categories of Greek philosophy, either Platonic (before the eleventh century) or Aristotelian (after the eleventh century in the West), for Old Testament law. Thus, Christians have been told for almost two millennia: "Don't trust the Mosaic law!" So, most Christians do not trust it. Most Christian leaders not only do not trust it; they hate it. They are outraged by it. The Mosaic law is an insult to their sense of justice. They are relieved to learn that Jesus supposedly had nothing to do with it. So, it would be silly for me to say, "Trust me; the theologians are all wrong about the Mosaic law," and then offer a 200-page commentary as evidence. Who would believe me? (Not many of them will believe this fat commentary, but at least it will be more difficult for honest critics to dismiss it as obviously incomplete.)

11. S. Lewis Johnson, "The Paralysis of Legalism," *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol. 116 (April/June 1963).

D. Short Commentaries and Judicial Relativism

There are at least three reasons why we have short Bible commentaries today: (1) modern Christian readers do not read very much, and certainly not long books filled with detailed arguments, let alone footnotes; (2) modern Christian scholars do not expect their conclusions to be applied to society, so they announce their conclusions rather than defend them in detail; and (3) nobody wants the responsibility of applying biblical texts to the contemporary world.

In a time of widespread apostasy and imminent judgment, silence is the preferred stance of God's people: "And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word" (I Kings 18:21). Why such silence? Because God's covenant people see themselves as outnumbered: "Then said Elijah unto the people, I, even I only, remain a prophet of the LORD; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men" (I Kings 18:22). God's people do not like the visible odds, nor did prophets. Judicial silence seems safer, though not for prophets. The covenant-keeper asks himself: "Why bring a covenant lawsuit against a majority of voters? It is better to remain silent, even if this means booking passage on a summer cruise to Tarshish."

One result of this outlook is short Bible commentaries. I did not write this commentary to meet the needs of those readers who prefer short commentaries. If Christians are ever to become doers of the word and not hearers only, they need someone to tell them exactly what the word requires them to do, and why. Leviticus tells Christians what they should still be doing.

"That's just your opinion," some critic may respond. Yes, sir, it is indeed my opinion. The far more relevant question readers need to answer is this: *Is it also God's opinion*? If every controversial statement in this commentary is automatically dismissed as "just one person's opinion," this implies that all controversial opinions in this life are judicially irrelevant. How about this controversial opinion? "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled" (Matt. 5:17–19). Or this one? "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36). But, as the Pharisees said in effect to Jesus: "That's just your opinion. Who

are you to say?" This persuaded them that God's judgment was not coming. But in A.D. 70, judgment finally did come.[12]

E. Dispensationalism's Dilemma: Bahnsen or Gomes?

Modern fundamentalists are generally dispensationalists. They argue that Old Tesment laws are no longer in force, unless the New Testament reaffirms them. This has led to numerous problems for dispensational theologians in the field of ethics.

1. The Feinbergs

Dispensational scholars John and Paul Feinberg issued a hermeneutical challenge in 1993: "The evangelical must decide which rules as stated in Scripture apply to our own day, and he must know how to decide which apply."[13] They were correct; the evangelical is morally bound to do this. He will resist doing this as long as he can, however. Evangelicals sense where such questions lead: toward self-conscious antinomianism, or self-conscious compromise with humanism, or self-conscious theonomy. The more socially relevant they want to be, the more the first choice is closed to them. They did not want to join dispensational author Dave Hunt in a spiritual and intellectual campground for Protestant pietists and mystics.[14]

As dispensationalists, the Feinbergs denied any mandatory judicial continuity between the Old Testament's civil law and today, since New Testament life "is not life under a theocracy."[15] This is the most important statement for social ethics that any anti-theonomic Christian can assert. But until it is proven exegetically, it remains only an assertion. I ask: Would any Christian assert the same anti-theocratic[16] thesis with respect to the family covenant under God and the church covenant under God? If not, then on what judicial basis is such a statement correct regarding the civil covenant under God? An appeal to Western history since, say, 1788 (United States) or 1789 (France),

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12. David Chilton, *The Days of Vengeance: An Exposition of the Book of Revelation* (Ft. Worth, Texas: Dominion Press, 1987). *The Great Tribulation* (Ft. Worth, Texas: Dominion Press, 1987).

13. John S. Feinberg and Paul D. Feinberg, *Ethics for a Brave New World* (Westchester, Illinois: Crossway, 1993), p. 33.

14. On Hunt's pietism, see Gary DeMar and Peter Leithart, *The Reduction of Christianity: A Biblical Response to Dave Hunt* (Ft. Worth, Texas: Dominion Press, 1988).

15. Feinbergs, *Ethics*, p. 36.

16. *Theocracy* is defined as "God rules."

begs the judicial question. What must be proven is their assertion that the New Testament "assumes that believers will be under the political rule of non-believing rulers. . . ."[17] That the New Testament *makes provision* for such a calamity there can be no doubt; but what is the evidence that Jesus and the New Testament authors assumed that this is an eschatologically permanent condition throughout history? Where is it implied in Scripture that Nero's Rome—or Julian the Apostate's—is inevitable eschatologically and therefore binding judicially (or vice versa), whereas Constantine's Rome—or Theodosius'—is a departure from New Testament judicial standards? Why should John Calvin's Geneva be dismissed as a covenantal deviation in civil government? Is Stalin's Russia to be accepted on principle as having conformed far closer than Calvin's Geneva to the covenantally binding New Testament standard with respect to its official source of civil law? These are not merely rhetorical questions. They deserve straightforward answers, but I do not think I will see any straightforward answers in the books and journals of Christian political pluralists.[18]

The Feinbergs argued: "It is inconsistent to say the Church is governed by the New Covenant when it comes to salvation, but by the Mosaic Code (and Covenant) when it comes to law."[19] This is quite true—as true as it is irrelevant to the theological point they are trying to make. I ask: What orthodox Christian theologian has ever argued that the Old Covenant had a way of salvation different from the New Covenant? Paul cited Habakkuk 2:4: "The just shall live by faith" (Gal. 3:11b). Lutheran scholar and theologian Robert G. Hoerber put the issue well: ". . . there is no evidence in the Old Testament or in Judaism that Jews believed that good works merit salvation. . . . The Jews observed the ceremonial laws of the Old Testament in order to belong to God's people, not to earn salvation."[20] The Feinbergs continued: "A discontinuity position avoids this problem"—a non-existent, utterly bizarre theological problem of their own invention—"by claiming that the Church is governed by the New Covenant as to salvation and by the Law of Christ as to law."[21]

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17. *Ibid*., p. 37.
18. Gary North, *Political Polytheism: The Myth of Pluralism* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1989).
19. Feinbergs, *Ethics*, p. 37.
20. Robert G. Hoerber, "Minors and Majors," *Christian News* (Oct. 4, 1993), p. 19.
21. Feinbergs, *Ethics*, p. 37.

2. Judicial Content

The three-fold ethical problem that a "discontinuity theologian" has to answer (and steadfastly refuses to) is this: (1) show exegetically why, where, and how "the Law of Christ" is different in content from the law of Moses; (2) discuss the biblically binding judicial content of this new law-order; (3) do this without abandoning the very concept of a unique biblical ethics, i.e., without surrendering civil law to covenant-breakers. The Christian world has been waiting patiently since 1830 for a dispensational theologian to write a book on New Testament social ethics—a book based exclusively on "the Law of Christ." This is a long time to wait. Frankly, I do not think the book is ever going to appear.

The Feinbergs understood their problem: identifying the biblical source of judicial content. Is it in the Old Testament, the New Testament, or both? They asserted: "Where the content of the Mosaic Law, for example, and the Law of Christ overlap, appeal to the OT is proper."[22] This appeal to overlapping content is judicially and theologically irrelevant on dispensational terms. There is no reason, given their view of the law, to appeal to Moses if Christ has affirmed a particular law. The Mosaic law is superfluous, dispensationally speaking. It is either annulled or else merely supplemental and non-binding. I ask: Exactly where are these New Testament principles of civil law affirmed and developed in detail comparable to the Mosaic case laws? The Feinbergs knew: nowhere.

They repeatedly tried to escape this embarrassing problem. For example, they tried to identify a New Testament passage that forthrightly affirms capital punishment. They appealed to Romans 13:1–7 (which does not mention capital punishment) and also appeal back to Noah (Gen. 9:5–6).[23] But what, on their presupposition, has Moses got to do with either passage? Dispensationalists House and Ice rejected all appeals to the Mosaic law in search of capital crimes; they appeal solely to the Noachic Covenant. The nations are (they used the present tense) under the Noachic Covenant, not the Mosaic.[24] But the only crime mentioned to Noah was the shedding of human blood. Try to build a civilization on just one civil law. It cannot be done.

22. *Ibid*., p. 39.

23. *Idem*.

24. H. Wayne House and Thomas D. Ice, *Dominion Theology: Blessing or Curse?* (Portland, Oregon: Multnomah Press, 1988), p. 130.

3. Hermeneutics and Abortion

In their desire to become socially relevant dispensationalists—a self-conscious break with American dispensationalism, 1925 to 1975—the Feinbergs could let the matter rest here. They wanted to say something biblically relevant against abortion. They therefore broke with Dallas Seminary and Talbot Seminary, both of which had remained deathly silent on this topic. They turned to a case law of Exodus to affirm their commitment to the anti-abortion movement. They had a problem: the only place in all the Bible that clearly sets forth a law against abortion is Exodus 21:22–25. So, rather than declare their hostility to abortion based on an unswerving commitment to a Mosaic law, they declared their willingness to accept a Mosaic law because of their hostility to abortion.

> For example, nowhere in the NT does one find the specific regulations of Exod 21:22–25 that protect pregnant women and their unborn children. Those ordinances are part of the Mosaic Code but are not part of the NT Law of Christ. On the other hand, as we shall argue when discussing abortion, proper understanding of that passage shows it to be one of the strongest passages of Scripture defending the rights of pregnant women and unborn children. Given that fact, it seems proper to appeal to it as indicating God's attitude toward any kind of harm to the unborn, including abortion. Since nothing in the NT suggests that God's attitude toward the unborn has changed, the OT passage is relevant for determining God's attitude toward the unborn and for demanding protection of them.[25]

This surrendered their hermeneutic. They began this section of their book by rejecting Bahnsen's statement of the theonomic position, namely, "that unless Scripture shows change with respect to OT law, NT era believers should assume it is still in force."[26] Bahnsen did indeed teach this; this is his theonomic hermeneutic: *the presumption of judicial continuity*. Yet they defended their appeal to a Mosaic case law on this same basis: "Since nothing in the NT suggests that God's attitude toward the unborn has changed, the OT passage is relevant for determining God's attitude toward the unborn and for demanding protection of them." That is to say, *they adopted Bahnsen's hermeneutic as the only one that could deliver them, in the name of the Bible, into the camp of the pro-life movement*.

In July, 1970, over two years before the United States Supreme Court handed down the *Roe v. Wade* decision, which legalized abor-

25. Feinbergs, *Ethics*, p. 39.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 34.

tions on demand, Rushdoony challenged the church to return to Exodus 21:22–25 as the basis of its opposition to abortion. Anything less, he warned, has led in the past to compromises with paganism on this question. He wrote:

> Among the earliest battle-lines between the early Christians and the Roman Empire was the matter of abortion, Greek and Roman laws had at times forbidden abortion, even as they had also permitted it. The matter was regarded by these pagan cultures as a question of state policy: if the state wanted births, abortion was a crime against the state; if the state had no desire for the birth of certain children, abortion was either permissible or even required. Because the state represented ultimate order, morality was what the state decreed. To abort or not to abort was thus a question of politics, not of God's law. Plato, for example, held that the state could compel abortion where unapproved parents proceeded without the approval of the state.
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> Very early, the Christians accused the heathen of murder, holding that abortion is a violation of God's law, "Thou shalt not murder." It was also a violation of the law of Exodus 21:22–25, which held that even accidental abortion was a criminal offense. If a woman with child were accidentally aborted, but no harm followed to either mother or child, even then a fine was mandatory. If the foetus died, then the death penalty was mandatory.
>
> Because the law of the Roman Empire did not regard abortion as a crime, the early church imposed a life sentence as a substitute: penance for life, to indicate that it was a capital offence. The Council of Ancrya, 314 A.D., while making note of this earlier practice, limited the penance to ten years. There were often reversions to the earlier severity, and for a time, in later years, the administration of any draught for purposes of causing an abortion were punishable by death. The Greek and Roman influence tended to weaken the Christian stand by sophisticating the question, by trying to establish when the child or foetus could be considered a living soul. The Biblical law does not raise such questions: at any point, abortion requires the death penalty.[27]

The leaders of conservative Protestant churches in the United States remained prophetically silent when *Roe v. Wade* was handed down on January 22, 1973. The conservative seminaries also remained silent. (They still remain silent.) When, half a decade later, a few fundamentalist leaders began, very tentatively, to get involved in the prolife movement, they sought a biblical justification for this move into social activism. This raised a major theological problem, one which none of them is ever forthright enough to admit in public. By ac-

27. *Chalcedon Report* (July 1, 1970). Reprinted in R. J. Rushdoony, *The Roots of Reconstruction* (Vallecito, California: Ross House, 1991), p. 710.

knowledging that Exodus 21:22–25 is the only biblical law prohibiting abortion, they would have had to admit that Rushdoony had already pre-empted the position because of his view of the continuity of the Mosaic law. *They understood that to appeal to Exodus 21:22–25 is to invoke the theonomic hermeneutic*. They have generally feared to do this. The Feinbergs were an exception, and the results were intellectually embarrassing. They offered no explanation for their abandonment of dispensationalism's hermeneutic: *the presumption of judicial discontinuity*.

Today, many Christian anti-abortionists blithely assert that "abortion is murder." We theonomists ask them a question: *What is the biblically mandatory civil penalty for murder*? They see a terrifying chasm opening up before them. They refuse to combine their pro-capital punishment stance with respect to murder—a biblically correct connection—with their rhetoric about abortion's being murder. If they did, they would have to call for legislation demanding the future execution of physicians, nurses, and former mothers who have been lawfully convicted of having participated in an abortion. So, they either remain silent or judicially schizophrenic on this issue. They do not take the Bible's mandated sanctions seriously. They do not even take their own rhetoric seriously. Not surprisingly, the politicians see no need to take them seriously. Abortion continues to be legal.

The self-contradictory hermeneutic of the two Feinbergs is a visible result of the fundamentalists' long-term judicial dilemma. They want judicial continuity when convenient (e.g., anti-abortion), while rejecting judicial continuity when inconvenient (e.g., anti-Bahnsen). They cannot have it both ways. Step by step, fundamentalists and evangelicals are being forced to choose between Bahnsen's hermeneutic and Gomes' hermeneutic. They are willing to do almost anything, such as write theologically befuddled books, to defer this decision.

Conclusion

Few people are sufficiently interested in the Bible to read it cover to cover. Of those who are this interested in the Bible, few are interested in the Old Testament. Of those interested in the Old Testament, few (including pastors) are interested in theology.[28] Of those who are interested in theology, few are interested in biblical law. Of those who are interested in biblical law, few are interested in Mosaic laws that

28. David F. Wells, *No Place for Truth; or Whatever Happened to Evangelical Theology?* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1993).

are no longer in force. In this commentary, I show why most of the economic laws in Leviticus are no longer in force.

Then why spend so much time, space, and money to prove my point in a period of history in which hardly any Christian assumes that any of these laws are still in force? Answer: because Christians need a principle of biblical interpretation to sift through the laws of the Bible. Without such a sifting principle—a hermeneutic—Christians risk falling into one of two disastrous errors: legalism-Phariseeism or antinomianism. A careful study of no other biblical book is better calculated to force Christian interpreters to discover and then apply a principle of biblical judicial interpretation. Leviticus is the hard case, judicially speaking. Get through Leviticus intact, and the other 65 books of the Bible become comparatively smooth sailing.

There is another issue to consider. Some of the laws of Leviticus are still binding. Which ones? This is a difficult question to answer, but Christians need to find the correct answer. This, too, requires a hermeneutic: a consistent, coherent principle of biblical judicial interpretation that enables us to study other books of the Bible and other case laws. A serious Bible commentary on the Mosaic law should instruct the reader on how to do this work of interpretation. Very few commentaries on the Old Testament do this.

There is an old saying: "Give a man a fish, and you have fed him for a day. Teach him to fish, and you have fed him for a lifetime." This principle of feeding always holds true, at least until the fish give out. In biblical interpretation, the fish will never give out. Finite minds will never succeed in exhausting the potential of infinite projects. The work of interpretation and application must go on. It is therefore not sufficient for me to present a series of conclusions. The reader deserves to know how a commentator reached his or her conclusions. This is why *Boundaries and Dominion* is so large. I show you how I came to my conclusions. Go, and do thou likewise.

Let me state the obvious: this is a Bible commentary. It is not a treatise on economics. It was written one chapter at a time; it should be read the same way. A commentary is supposed to throw light on specific verses or passages. Because the Book of Leviticus is structured in terms of a unifying concept—boundaries—this commentary can be read cover to cover, but most readers will probably confine themselves to specific chapters.[29] In any case, the reader should recall

29. This is why there is occasional repetition in subsequent chapters. Few commentaries ever get read cover to cover. This one, being digital, does not even have covers.

what I wrote about my original commentary on Exodus 21–23, *Tools of Dominion*: you eat an elephant one bite at a time.

This commentary is aimed at economists, who in my day are unlikely to pay any attention. It is aimed at pastors, who rarely read long books, especially on economics. Most of all, it is aimed at intellectually serious Bible students who have not yet decided what their callings in life should be.[30] I hope this book will give them a larger picture of what full-time Christian service really is. They, too, can devote their lives to discovering what God requires from His people, and then try to persuade Christians to believe a word of it—a seemingly foolish task, indeed, *if there were not covenantal sanctions in history*. But there are: positive and negative. The positive sanctions are wonderful, but seeking to avoid the negative sanctions is imperative.

I know, I know: that's just *my* opinion.

30. They may have occupations. These jobs are rarely their callings. I define a person's calling as follows: "The most important lifetime service that he can render to God in which he would be most difficult to replace."

PREFACE

And further, by these, my son, be admonished: of making many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh.

ECCLESIASTES 12:12

When I began writing my economic commentary on the Bible in the spring of 1973,[1] I did not imagine that it would take me over two decades just to begin Numbers. When I escalated my time commitment to the project in the fall of 1977 to 10 hours per week, 50 weeks per year, I also did not imagine that it would take this long. I did not imagine that I would write such lengthy appendixes as *Dominion and Common Grace*, *Is the World Running Down?*, *Political Polytheism,* and *Millennialism and Social Theory*. But most remarkable of all, I did not imagine that a 27-year task to complete the Pentateuch turned out to be the world's longest footnote to another man's thesis: Ray Sutton's 1987 elaboration of the Bible's five-point covenant structure.[2] The five points of the biblical covenant model are:

1. **T**ranscendence/immanence/sovereignty
2. **H**ierarchy/representation/authority
3. **E**thics/boundaries/dominion
4. **O**ath/judgment/sanctions
5. **S**uccession/inheritance/continuity

The acronym in English is THEOS, the Greek word for God.

I am not alone in my surprise. When I hired David Chilton to write a commentary on the Book of Revelation, neither of us imagined that his *Days of Vengeance* (1987) would also wind up as an eloquent footnote to Sutton's *That You May Prosper* (1987), but it did.[3] Prior to Sut-

1. The first chapter was published in the *Chalcedon Report* in May, 1973.

2. Ray R. Sutton, *That You May Prosper: Dominion By Covenant*, 2nd ed. (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, [1987] 1992).

3. David Chilton, *The Days of Vengeance: An Exposition of the Book of Revelation* (Ft. Worth,

ton's application, Chilton had been totally bogged down for over a year, unable to complete the book's manuscript. After he heard Sutton present his discovery at a Wednesday evening Bible study that he and I attended in 1985, Chilton re-structured the manuscript, added some new material, and completed it within a few months. Today, a quarter century after its publication, critics have not yet attempted to refute Chilton's book, let alone Sutton's. (Note: a brief negative book review is not a refutation. Rather, it is a public notice of the need for one.)

While I have never been bogged down with any volume in this set of economic commentaries, there is no doubt that *Tools of Dominion, Boundaries and Dominion*, and *Inheritance and Dominion* would have looked very different if Sutton had not made his discovery, and I had not grasped its importance for my work. The five points of the biblical covenant are crucial for understanding Leviticus.

A. The Pentateuch's Five-Point Covenant Structure

As far as I am aware, what no one had seen—or at least no one had published—when I began this commentary project in 1973 is this: the Pentateuch is structured in terms of the Bible's five-point covenant structure. I recognized this structure of the five books of Moses only after I had finished reading (as I recall) the third draft of Sutton's manuscript. My discovery forced me to think through my strategy for the entire commentary. I wrote a Preface at the last minute for *The Sinai Strategy* (1986),[4] introducing the five-point model. Then I wrote a General Introduction to the entire economic commentary series in the second edition of *The Dominion Covenant: Genesis* (1987).[5]

Honest critics who reject Sutton's thesis will eventually have to take into account my commentaries and the support volumes I have published. (Dishonest critics will, as usual, murmur in private to their students that nothing has been proven, that this model is all smoke and mirrors. But I am confident that they will not go into print on this, also as usual.)[6] Here is the five-point outline of the Pentateuch:

Texas: Dominion Press, 1987).

4. Gary North, *Authority and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Exodus* (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, 2012), Part 2: *Decalogue and Dominion*.

5. Now titled *Sovereignty and Dominion* (2012).

6. See Appendix I: "Critics of the Five-Point Covenant Structure."

1. Genesis

Genesis is a book dealing with God's transcendence. Transcendence is point one of the biblical covenant. The opening words of Genesis affirm God as Creator, testifying to God's absolute *transcendence*, the foundation of the Creator-creature distinction: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Gen. 1:1). God established a *hierarchy* through His covenant: mankind over nature (Gen. 1:26–28), each man ruling over his wife (Gen. 2:18). He gave them a *law*: no eating from the prohibited tree (Gen. 2:17a). He promised to bring *judgment* against them if they disobeyed (Gen. 2:17b). They violated His law, but out of His grace, God promised them an *heir* (Gen. 3:15). Here are the five points of the biblical covenant model.

What is the story of Abraham all about? It is the story of a promise that was sealed by a covenant act and sign (circumcision). Tribal Israel's story is one of covenant-breaking, God's negative sanctions, and the renewal of Abraham's covenant. Genesis ends with Jacob's verbal blessings and cursings on his sons. Jacob transferred the inheritance, tribe by tribe. Then he died. But, above all, Genesis is the story of God the absolutely sovereign Creator and providential Sustainer of history, the transcendent God who has revealed Himself to His people.

2. Exodus

Exodus is clearly the book of the covenant itself. "And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the LORD hath said will we do, and be obedient" (Ex. 24:7). "And the king commanded all the people, saying, Keep the passover unto the LORD your God, as it is written in the book of this covenant" (II Kings 23:21). God established His authority over the Israelites by delivering them out of Egypt. This is what Kline calls historical prologue: point two of the covenant.[7] But what did the historical prologue of an ancient covenant treaty affirm? Hierarchy: the power of the king over all of his rivals. Exodus was written to prove that God was above Pharaoh in history. Hierarchy, not historical prologue, is the heart of point two of the biblical covenant model.

God brought visible historical sanctions against Egypt. This was evidence of His covenantal authority in history. Deny God's predict-

7. Meredith G. Kline, *Treaty of the Great King: The Covenant Structure of Deuteronomy: Studies and Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1963), pp. 52–61: "Historical Prologue: Covenant History, 1:6–4:49."

able covenantal corporate sanctions in New Covenant history, and you necessarily deny the historical prologue aspect of the New Covenant. You reduce the rule of the God of the New Testament to the status of a supreme ruler of a priestly hierarchy. You deny His kingly authority. This is what Kline did with his theory of the Mosaic Covenant as an *intrusion*—an ethical discontinuity—that pointed to God's final judgment, therefore (???) having no judicial relevance in the New Covenant era. Specifically, the covenant's negative sanctions, revealed in the imprecatory psalms, led to Kline's neo-dispensational ethical theory.[8] This leaves Christians at the mercy of a divine State—the divine rule of politics. It leaves them without any possibility of constructing either a systematically biblical political theory or a broader Christian social theory.[9]

One important implication of point two is that God has established the hierarchical principle of *judicial representation*. The principle of representation began in Exodus with God's call to Moses out of the burning bush, telling him to go before Pharaoh as His representative. God delivered the Israelites from Egypt, and then He met with Moses, their representative, at Sinai. In Exodus 18, Moses established a hierarchical civil appeals court system, whereupon God met with Moses as Israel's representative and delivered His covenant law. The Book of Exodus is a book about rival kings and rival kingdoms, God vs. Pharaoh.[10] Men must subordinate themselves either to God or Satan through their covenantal representatives.

The Book of Exodus is easily divided into five sections: (1) the intervention of God into history to deliver His people; (2) the establishment of Israel's civil judicial hierarchy; (3) the giving of the law; (4) the judgment of Israel after the golden calf incident; and (5) the building of the tabernacle, which they would carry with them into

8. Meredith G. Kline, *The Structure of Biblical Authority*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1972), pp. 161–67. Kline argued that God's sanctions in history today are covenantally unpredictable. Kline, "Comments on an Old-New Error," *Westminster Theological Journal*, XLI (Fall 1978), p. 184.

9. This is why pietists and dispensationalists of all kinds, including Kline's followers, are so hostile to theonomy. It is not just because of theonomy's theology of the covenant but also because of its necessary application: the construction a revelational social theory based on God's corporate sanctions in history and theonomy's demand that the state impose the Mosaic civil sanctions. This is an affront to the modern state and modern politics, and Protestant pietists have had an operational alliance with modern politics for over three centuries based on Roger Williams' theory of pluralism and the secular state. On this alliance, see Gary North, *Political Polytheism: The Myth of Pluralism* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1989).

10. North, *Authority and Dominion*, Part 1: *Representation and Dominion* (1985).

Canaan. Also, the Ten Commandments are divided into two sets of five points, each set paralleling Sutton's five-point model.[11] The first commandment, honoring God, is paralleled by the sixth commandment, the prohibition against murdering man. Man is made in God's image. The fifth commandment, honoring father and mother (household priests), has to do with succession: that we may live long lives in God's land. The tenth commandment, the prohibition against covetousness, also has to do with succession: not desiring to appropriate another person's inheritance.

3. Leviticus

Leviticus is the book that established Israel's ritual and moral boundaries. It is therefore a book about dominion, for boundaries in the Bible are always associated with dominion. The third point of the biblical covenant deals with boundaries. Similarly, the third commandment deals with the proper use of God's name in our dealings with each other, thereby affirming an ownership boundary surrounding God's name, implying *dominion through ethics*,[12] and the eighth commandment parallels the third, for it is law three in the second list of five. "Thou shalt not steal" is a command regarding legal boundaries.[13] The eighth commandment indicates that the concept of boundaries is basic to economic ethics, the third point of the covenant.[14] The fifth commandment is "Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." This is a law of inheritance: point five.[15]

Gordon Wenham commented on Leviticus' place in the Old Testament's covenant-treaty structure: "(3) The centerpiece of every treaty was the stipulations section. In collections of law, such as Hammurabi's, the laws formed the central section. The same holds for the biblical collections of law. In the treaties a basic stipulation of total fidelity to the suzerain may be distinguished from the more detailed stipulations covering specific problems. In this terminology 'Be holy' could be described as the basic stipulation of Leviticus. The other

11. *Ibid*, Part 2, *Decalogue and Dominion*, Preface.

12. *Ibid*., ch. 23.

13. *Ibid*., ch. 28.

14. Gary North, *Inherit the Earth: Biblical Blueprints for Economics* (Ft. Worth, Texas: Dominion Press, 1987), ch. 3.

15. I conclude that the Catholic and Lutheran structuring of the Ten Commandments is incorrect. Calvin was correct: "honor thy father and mother" is the fifth commandment.

laws explain what this means in different situations."[16] Leviticus is literally the center of the Pentateuch: two books precede it; two books follow it.

God *sets apart* His people and their worship. He makes them *holy*—set apart. He places ritual boundaries around them. "Leviticus centers around the concept of the holiness of God, and how an unholy people can acceptably approach Him and then remain in continued fellowship. The way to God is only through blood sacrifice, and the walk with God is only through obedience to His laws."[17] The issue is sanctification, and this requires boundaries: "The Israelites serve a holy God who requires them to be holy as well. To be holy means to be 'set apart' or 'separated.' They are to be separated *from* other nations *unto* God. In Leviticus the idea of holiness appears eighty-seven times, sometimes indicating ceremonial holiness (ritual requirements), and at other times moral holiness (purity of life)."[18] R. K. Harrison wrote that the first 15 chapters deal with sacrificial principles and procedures relating to the removal of sin. "The last eleven chapters emphasize ethics, morality and holiness. The unifying theme of the book is the insistent emphasis upon God's holiness, coupled with the demand that the Israelites shall exemplify this spiritual attribute in their own lives."[19] Holiness means *separation* from the heathen.[20] It means *boundaries*.

4. Numbers

Numbers is the book of God's judgment against Israel in the wilderness. Judgment is point four of the biblical covenant: God's response to oath-keeping or oath-breaking. God judged them when they refused to accept the testimony of Joshua and Caleb regarding the vulnerability of Canaan to invasion (Num. 14). They rebelled against Him, and He punished the nation by delaying their entry into Canaan until they were all dead, except Joshua and Caleb. "Numbers records the failure of Israel to believe in the promise of God and the resulting judgment of wandering in the wilderness for forty years."[21] Furthermore, "Israel as a nation is in its infancy at the outset

16. Gordon J. Wenham, *The Book of Leviticus* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1979), p. 30.

17. *The Open Bible: Expanded Edition* (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, 1983), p. 95.

18. *Ibid*., p. 96.

19. R. K. Harrison, *Leviticus: An Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 1980), p. 14.

20. Jacob Milgrom, "The Biblical Diet Laws as an Ethical System: Food and Faith," *Interpretation*, XVII (1963), p. 295.

21. *Open Bible*, p. 127.

of this book, only thirteen months after the exodus from Egypt. In Numbers, the book of divine discipline, it becomes necessary for the nation to go through the painful process of testing and maturation. God must teach His people the consequences of irresponsible decisions. The forty years of wilderness experience transforms them from a rabble of ex-slaves into a nation ready to take the Promised Land. Numbers begins with the old generation (1:1–10:10), moves through a tragic transitional period (10:11–25:18), and ends with the new generation (26–36) at the doorway to the land of Canaan."[22] I titled my commentary on Numbers, *Sanctions and Dominion* (1997).

5. Deuteronomy

Deuteronomy is the book of Israel's inheritance, point five of the biblical covenant. "It is addressed to the new generation destined to possess the land of promise—those who survived the forty years of wilderness wandering."[23] The children of the generation of the exodus renewed their covenant with God and inherited Canaan on this basis. Moses blessed the tribes (Deut. 33), a traditional sign of inheritance in the Old Testament (Gen. 27; 49). Moses died outside the land, but before he died, God allowed him to look from Mt. Nebo into the promised land (Deut. 34:4). He saw the inheritance. The book closes with the elevation of Joshua to leadership, the transitional event of inheritance or succession (Deut. 34:9–12). I titled my commentary on Deuteronomy, *Inheritance and Dominion* (1999).

Those who reject Sutton's thesis need to present an alternative model of the Pentateuch, one which fits it better, and one which also fits the Ten Commandments better, since they are also structured in terms of the five-point model: 1–5 and 6–10. Critics need to pay attention that old political aphorism: "You can't beat something with nothing." It is not enough to mumble that "Sutton's book tries to prove too much," or "There are lots of different models in the Bible." There are indeed lots of proposed biblical models, among them the Trinity, the seven-day week, and the biblical covenant.[24] But when we come to the

22. *Ibid.*, p. 128.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 171.

24. In my Publisher's Preface to Sutton's 1987 first edition, I wrote: "...the author has discovered the key above all other keys to interpreting the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation..." (xi). But what about the doctrine of God? It is included in the first point of the biblical covenant. The covenant is more comprehensive than the doctrine of God. It includes hierarchy—God > man > creation—law, sanctions, and eschatology. What about the doctrine of the Trinity? What about creation? The Trinity and the doctrine of the Creator-creature distinction (creation) are guiding presuppositions of

question of *God's formal judicial relationships with men*, we always come to the covenant. It is a five-point structure. Accept no substitutes!

B. The Five Levitical Sacrifices

Most Christians have trouble remembering the required sacrifices of Leviticus. When people have difficulty remembering something, it is usually because they have no handle, no model by which to classify what appear to be unconnected facts.[25] This has been the problem with the five Levitical sacrifices.

Five sacrifices. "Oh, no," moan the critics. "Here it comes. He's going to argue that they conform to Sutton's five-point covenant model." Exactly!

1. The Whole Burnt Offering (Lev. 1)

This offering had to be completely consumed on God's altar, except for the hide, which belonged to the officiating priest (Lev. 7:8). None of the food portion could be retained, either by the priest or the donor. The animal had to be perfect: without blemish. The Hebrew word *olaw*, "burning," means "going up," as in smoke. It was a holocaust. Hartley called this the main sacrifice under the Mosaic sacrificial system.[26] "As an atoning sacrifice the whole offering was offered not so much for specific sins but for the basic sinfulness of each person and the society as a whole."[27] The entire offering went to God, a symbol of the total sacrifice required by God of every man.[28]

There was a strict law for the priests: "And the fire upon the altar shall be burning in it; it shall not be put out: and the priest shall burn wood on it every morning, and lay the burnt offering in order upon it; and he shall burn thereon the fat of the peace offerings. The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar; it shall never go out" (Lev.

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orthodoxy, as reflected in the creeds. Nevertheless, the Trinitarian doctrine of God, like the doctrine of creation, appears in very few texts in the Bible. The Trinity is a doctrine derived from a comparative handful of texts in the New Testament. In contrast, the covenant structure is found in hundreds of texts and even whole books of the Bible, including Leviticus.The traditional Christian exegetical exercise called "find the implied but camouflaged Trinity in the Old Testament," is far more difficult and far less persuasive than "find the implied or explicit covenant structure in the Old Testament."

25. This is why military history is so demanding, and why so few academic historians work in the field.

26. John E. Hartley, *Leviticus*, vol. 4 of the *Word Bible Commentary* (Dallas, Texas: Word Books, 1992), p. 17.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 18.

28. *Ibid.*, p. 24.

6:12–13). Why so strict? Because this fire testified to the nature of God. The Book of Hebrews calls God a consuming fire (Heb. 12:29). This is the God who must be feared above all other gods, all other fears. This is the God who consumes sacrifices on His altar.

This transcendent God is an immanent God. He meets men at His altar. If men fail to offer an appropriate sacrifice, God will consume them with fire. *This is the presence of God in fiery judgment*. "Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there" (Ps. 139:7–8). This is a sovereign God: transcendent and immanent.

2. The Grain Offering (Lev. 2)

The King James Version has this as a *meat offering*. This is incorrect. It was a grain offering. There are two keys to understanding this offering. First, it had to be of unleavened grain (Lev. 2:4, 11). Second, it was required when Aaron was anointed high priest (Lev. 6:20). Commentators presume that this sacrifice was required also at the anointings of subsequent high priests.

First, the requirement of unleavened grain points back to the exodus. The Passover mandated unleavened bread, too. This was God's memorial of His deliverance of His people out of bondage. They were to bring none of Egypt's leaven out of Egypt or into the Promised Land. This sacrifice pointed back to what Kline identified as the historical prologue of the exodus: God's sovereign acts in history to deliver His people.[29] This means that this grain sacrifice is linked to point two of the covenant: historical prologue.

Second, the requirement that the sons of Aaron offer this sacrifice at the anointing of the high priest points to ecclesiastical hierarchy. The high priest was the most important officer in Israel. He met God in the holy of holies once a year. He was the primary mediator between God and Israel. This points to point two: hierarchy/representation.

3. The Peace Offering (Lev. 3)

This offering was voluntary. It was not part of the system of atonement. Hartley translated it the offering of *well-being*. So did Milgrom.[30] There were three types of peace offerings: praise offering (Lev. 2:15),

29. Kline, *Structure of Biblical Authority*, p. 53.

30. Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, vol. 3 of *The Anchor Bible* (New York: Doubleday, 1991), p. 217.

vow (votive) offering (Lev. 7:16), and freewill offering (Lev. 7:16). Hartley wrote: "A primary aim of this sacrifice is for the offerer and his family or class, including invited guests, to eat the meat returned to them in a festive meal."[31]

The significant judicial fact of this offering was its openness. The offerer joined in a meal with his family and God. This indicates that the judicial barriers that always exist between God and sinful man were reduced. The participants' sins had already been dealt with judicially by another sacrifice. The sacrifice of well-being was a communion meal. The meal's participants were visibly identified as holy before God, set apart to praise Him and rejoice in His grace. The boundaries separating the offerer and this sacrifice were minimal compared to the boundaries around the other offerings. The offerer received back most of the offering. This points to point three of the covenant: ethics/boundaries.

4. The Purification Offering (Lev. 4–5:13)

This is called the *sin offering* in the King James Version. This was the sacrifice governing unintentional sins committed by the high priest, the civil ruler, the congregation as a whole, or individuals. "It describes behavior that violates the community's standards."[32] Without the purification offering, the whole community was endangered. These sacrifices were required to avoid God's negative sanctions in history. They were offered to escape "a religious judgment on deviant behavior."[33] Hartley cited a 1989 article by A. Marx, who argued that this sacrifice was required on three formal occasions: the investiture of Levites (Num. 8:1–36), the ordination of Aaron (Lev. 8:1–36; Ex. 29:1–37), and the consecration of the altar (Lev. 8:11, 15; Ex. 29:36–37). The Nazarite had to make a purification offering at the termination of his vow (Num. 6:13–20).[34]

David's concern is illustrative: "Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults. Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression" (Ps. 19:12–13). In other words, if we are careful about the small sins, we will not fall into the great ones. If the high priest, the civil ruler,

31. Hartley, *Leviticus*, p. 38.
32. *Ibid*., p. 55.
33. *Idem*.
34. *Ibid*., p. 56.

the whole congregation, and the individual all took such precautions, then God's wrath would not fall on Israel.

One sin that had to be dealt with by means of the purification offering was the false oath. "And if a soul sin, and hear the voice of swearing, and is a witness, whether he hath seen or known of it; if he do not utter it, then he shall bear his iniquity" (Lev. 5:1). Also, "if a soul swear, pronouncing with his lips to do evil, or to do good, whatsoever it be that a man shall pronounce with an oath, and it be hid from him; when he knoweth of it, then he shall be guilty in one of these" (Lev. 5:4). Here is the penalty: "And he shall bring his trespass offering unto the LORD for his sin which he hath sinned, a female from the flock, a lamb or a kid of the goats, for a sin offering; and the priest shall make an atonement for him concerning his sin" (Lev. 5:6). This is a trespass offering, or reparation offering (point five), but in the case of false oaths heard in secret or pronounced in ignorance, it is the judicial equivalent of the purification offering: "a sin offering." Point four of the biblical covenant deals with oaths: the formal invoking of God's negative sanctions, the self-maledictory oath. Such an oath calls down upon the oath-taker God's curses, should the oath-taker break the law of the covenant.

The law of purification stated that the vessels in which the animal's remains were cooked had to be broken (clay pots) or thoroughly scourged (metal utensils) (Lev. 6:28). Again, the ritual concern is judgment. The concern, therefore, is sanctions: point four of the biblical covenant model.

5. The Reparation Offering (Lev. 5:14–6:7)[35]

This is called the *trespass offering* in the King James Version. This sacrifice was required in cases of theft: an illegal appropriation of another man's inheritance, a violation of the tenth commandment (point five). A man uses deception to gain ownership of another man's goods. Then he lies to the victim and the civil authorities. To restore the legal relationship after the criminal voluntarily confesses the crime and the two false oaths, he must pay the victim the value of the item stolen plus a 20% penalty (Lev. 6:5).[36] He also has to offer a ram as a trespass offering to make atonement (Lev. 6:6–7).

There should be no confusion about what is involved in the sacri-

35. *Ibid.*, pp. 72–86.

36. Had he not confessed, and had he been convicted, the penalty was at least twofold restitution.

fice. First, the lost inheritance is restored to the victim, plus an extra one-fifth. The judicial relationship between the victim and the criminal is thereby restored, making it possible to gain the advantages of social cooperation. Second, God is repaid because of the criminal's false oath in civil court. The criminal avoids being cut off by God: disinheritance. The goal is continuity: survival and covenantal prosperity in history. This is point five of the biblical covenant model: succession.

Conclusion

The requirement that God's people be holy is still in force. There will never be an escape from this requirement. It is eternal. To understand at least some of the implications of this ethical requirement—point three of the biblical covenant model—Christians need to understand the Book of Leviticus. They need to understand that it is a very practical book, many of whose laws still have valid applications in modern society. We ignore this book at our peril.

The Pentateuch is itself revelatory of the five-point structure of God's covenant. My economic commentary on the Pentateuch is therefore a commentary on a covenant. I call it the dominion covenant, for it is the God-given, God-required assignment to mankind to exercise dominion and subdue the earth that defines mankind's task as the only creature who images God the Creator (Gen. 1:26).[37]

37. Gary North, *Sovereignty and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Genesis* (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, 2012), ch. 3.

INTRODUCTION

And the Lord *spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy: for I the* Lord *your God am holy. Ye shall fear every man his mother, and his father, and keep my sabbaths: I am the* Lord *your God. Turn ye not unto idols, nor make to yourselves molten gods: I am the* Lord *your God.*

LEVITICUS 19:1–4

The book of Leviticus is the Bible's premier book of holiness. The biblical meaning of "holy" is "set apart by God." It is related conceptually to "sanctify," "sanction," and "saint." It refers to any person, place, or thing with a God-ordained covenantal boundary around it. Everything inside such a boundary is sacrosanct. For example, we correctly speak of holy matrimony. This does not mean that every marriage is Christian. It means that God has placed a special judicial boundary around every marriage.

The book of Leviticus is the Bible's premier book of boundaries. There is an element of separation in every boundary, just as there is in holiness: *separation by sanctions*.[1] The Book of Numbers is the Pentateuchal book of sanctions, but the civil sanctions of Leviticus have alienated Christians and have outraged pagans. That certain sexual acts are forbidden in Leviticus is generally acceptable to most Christians, but the specified civil sanctions are a terrible mental burden for them. They will do almost anything, including dismissing the continuing validity of all the laws in Leviticus, in order to escape any personal or corporate responsibility for pressuring civil rulers to enforce the Levitical civil sanctions. Christians would rather deny all of the Levitical separations than affirm any of the Levitical civil sanctions. In short, they would rather deny the ethical terms of the Levitical system of holiness than affirm the judicial terms of Levitical civil justice.

1. See "Holiness," *A Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. James Hastings, 5 vols. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1900), II, p. 395.

A. Escaping Cultural Relevance

Here is a major dilemma for the modern church. Christians confidently affirm that "the Bible has answers for all questions." But one question is this: What relevance should Christianity have in culture? Modern antinomian Christians emphatically deny the judicial foundation of Christianity's cultural relevance in history: biblical law and its biblically mandated sanctions. Most Christians prefer pietism to cultural relevance, since civil responsibility accompanies cultural relevance. So, they seek holiness through withdrawal from the prevailing general culture.

This withdrawal has forced them to create alternative cultures—ghetto cultures—since there can be no existence for man without culture of some kind. The Amish have achieved a remarkable separation from the general culture, though not so radical as tourists in Amish country like to imagine, by abandoning such modern benefits as electricity in their homes and the automobile. But they travel in their buggies on paved highways, and they use electricity in their barns. They are always dependent on the peace-keeping forces of the nation. Pietistic Christians have longed for a similar separation, but without the degree of commitment shown by the Amish. They send their children into the public schools, and they still watch television. The result has been catastrophic: the widespread erosion of pietism's intellectual standards by the surrounding humanist culture, and the creation of woefully third-rate Christian alternatives. I offer as evidence the quality of American Christian radio broadcasting, especially contemporary Christian popular music. It is better than hard rock "music" and rap "music," no doubt, but compare it to classical music. Compare it to Bach, Mozart, or Beethoven. Compare hymns written after 1920 to those written by Isaac Watts and Charles Wesley.

The ultimate form of personal Christian withdrawal from culture is mysticism: an emotional and epistemological boundary between the Christian and the world around him. But there is a major theological risk with all forms of theistic mysticism. The proponents of theistic mysticism again and again in history have defined mysticism as union with God. By defining mysticism as metaphysical rather than ethical, mystics have frequently come to a terribly heretical conclusion: their hoped-for union with God is defined as metaphysical rather than ethical. They seek a union of their *being* with God. Meister Eckhart, the heretic of the early fourteenth century, concluded in his 28th Sermon

that "God and I are One."[2] This is a representative expression of the pantheism found in most forms of mysticism.[3] The mystic's quest for unity with God denies the Bible's definition of holiness: the separation of God from the creation.

B. The Creator/Creature Distinction

The ultimate boundary is the one separating God from man: the Creator/creature distinction. While man is made in God's image (Gen. 1:26), he is not God, nor does he participate in God's being. Man is commanded to be holy, for God is holy (Lev. 11:44–45; 19:2), but man is also warned not to seek divinity for himself (Gen. 11:6; Deut. 29:29; Job 38–41). Man is commanded to seek ethical unity with the perfect humanity of Jesus Christ, God incarnate, but man cannot attain ontological unity with God. A permanent boundary is placed between God's being and man's being. *The unity between God and man is to be ethical, never ontological or metaphysical.*

The doctrine of the Creator/creature distinction has enormous consequences for social theory and practice. A contemporary Jewish political scientist has correctly observed: "The boundary between God and man is His supreme safeguard against social chaos. For what would men not do to one another if they were to claim ultimate authority?"[4] When covenant-breaking men have sought to erase this divine-human boundary, they have reaped their appropriate reward: social chaos followed by tyranny. Twentieth-century Europe is a monument to this reality: World War I, Communism, Nazism, Italian Fascism, World War II, the Cold War, and the break-up of Yugoslavia in civil war after 1990. In addition to the politics of despair have come existentialism, nihilism, the self-conscious meaningless of modern art, pornography, the drug culture, and the mindlessness of hard rock music. The laws of Leviticus were designed to remind men not to erase the divine-human boundary. The Mosaic law was designed to avoid social chaos and tyranny. It established laws—boundaries—

2. *Meister Eckhart: A Modern Translation*, trans. Raymond Bernard Blakney (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1941), p. 232.

3. R. M. Bucke provided extracts of dozens of passages to this effect in the teachings and writings of numerous religious thinkers, from Buddha to Plotinus to the homosexual, nineteenth-century American poet, Walt Whitman. R. M. Bucke, *Cosmic Consciousness: A Study in the Evolution of the Human Mind* (New York: Dutton, [1901] 1969), Part 4.

4. Aaron Wildavsky, *The Nursing Father: Moses as a Political Leader* (University, Alabama: University of Alabama, 1984), p. 97. Professor Wildavsky died before I completed this manuscript. I had hoped to send him a copy of the book. He was one of the great conservative academic scholars in the second half of the twentieth century.

governing the relationships between men in order to remind men of the ultimate boundary between God and man.

This leads me to a very important point: any attempt to define Christian "relationships" apart from biblical law is a form of rebellion. *Relationships apart from God's revealed law and its mandated judicial sanctions are inherently antinomian.* It is common for modern Protestant evangelicals to blather on and on about "relationships" while denying the continuing validity of biblical law. This way lies tyranny. And adultery.

The fundamental boundary in history is the one between God and His creation. A subordinate boundary in history is the one between the state and the individual. Modern conservatism ignores the first boundary and therefore finds itself incapable of maintaining the second, either theoretically or institutionally. Rushdoony described the importance of biblical boundaries for biblical political theory: "Man's realm is on earth, and, since every man's heart is alien ground to every other man, he must rule by force in order to gain total dominion. God's realm and sovereignty is [*sic*] universal as Creator. He is on home ground everywhere in the universe, as much in command in the heart of every man as in heaven. For God, there is no alien ground, and hence no compulsion: He simply exercises His will over His own domain and creation in every crevice of the universe, and in every man's heart. Wherever the state moves beyond its God-appointed grounds, it is on alien ground, as indeed all men and institutions are wherever and whenever they transgress their appointed bounds."[5]

C. Israel's Boundaries

As we shall see in this commentary, most of Israel's economic boundaries were based on geography (land laws), tribal membership (seed laws), and ritual requirements (laws of sacrifice). These economic rules constituted a covenantal unity. As Americans say, they were a "package deal." These rules were temporary boundaries designed to shape the nation of Israel in very special ways. These judicial boundaries maintained the land and the people as a special province of God. The land of Israel became like the garden of Eden: a temporary residence uniquely under God's revealed law and uniquely under His historical sanctions. The land of Israel, like the garden of Eden, was to serve as a training area for covenant-keeping men. It was also to

5. R. J. Rushdoony, *Politics of Guilt and Pity* (Vallecito, California: Ross House [1970] 1995), p. 42.

serve as an example for covenant-breaking men (Deut. 4:4–8).[6] It was to serve both as God's boot camp and as His general headquarters for worldwide evangelism and cultural conquest.

The laws of Leviticus were designed to keep the leaven of evil outside of the land of Israel, but they were also designed to push the leaven of righteousness into the world around Israel. Levitical law was both defensive and offensive. One problem with virtually all commentaries on Leviticus is that they emphasize the defensive aspects of the Levitical laws: separation and exclusion. In this book, I do my best to point out the inclusive aspects of some of these laws. There were *laws of inclusion*, at least to the extent of placing the gentile world under the Ten Commandments and therefore inside the zone of predictable external blessings: positive sanctions in history. This was Jonah's message to Nineveh: God's covenant lawsuit. Had all of God's revealed laws been solely exclusionary, Jonah would not have been sent by God on his missionary journey. As I argue in this commentary, some of the Mosaic laws were cross-boundary laws that governed other nations, and are still valid today.

D. The Book of Priestly Holiness

Behind Jonah's prophetic ministry was a nation of priests. As Jacob Milgrom pointed out in the introduction to the first volume of his extraordinarily learned, extraordinarily large, and extraordinarily unreadable commentary on Leviticus, Leviticus is not about the tribe of Levi. It is about the priesthood. The Book of Numbers rather than Leviticus deals in detail with the laws governing the Levites. The reason why the book is called Leviticus is because in Hellenic times, when the Greek version of the Hebrew Old Testament appeared (the Septuagint), the term "Levites" meant priests.[7]

Milgrom wrote: "Theology is what Leviticus is all about. It pervades every chapter and almost every verse. It is not expressed in pronouncements but embedded in rituals."[8] But what is the focus of the book's theology? *Holiness*. Leviticus is pre-eminently the Old Covenant's book of holiness. To be holy is to be *set apart* by God: judicially, ethically, culturally, and in the case of the Old Covenant people

6. Gary North, *Inheritance and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Deuteronomy*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [1999] 2012), ch. 8.

7. Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, vol. 3 of *The Anchor Bible* (New York: Doubleday, 1991), p. 1.

8. *Ibid*., p. 42.

of God, geographically. God establishes boundaries. Leviticus is the Pentateuch's book of boundaries.

Leviticus also is the book of life. "Because impurity and holiness are antonyms," Milgrom wrote, "the identification of impurity with death must mean that holiness stands for life."[9] The book's rituals and ethical injunctions point to *separation from evil*, which is the sole basis of life in God's world. Adam's wilful violation of a verbally identified boundary in the garden brought universal death into history. Man's continuing imperfections also point to death. But the perfect honoring God's boundaries therefore brings life. Thus, the ritual and judicial rigors of Leviticus point to man's need of redemption by means of a perfect substitute whose death brings life to the boundary violator. *God's law kills those who are already under the sentence of death; on the other hand, it provides a better life for those who are alive*. The pre-eminent example of this truth is Jesus Christ, who contrasted His own ministry with that of a thief: "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10).

Israel's boundaries were established in terms of God's unique presence among His people: "And I will set my tabernacle among you: and my soul shall not abhor you. And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people" (Lev. 26:11–12). The Book of Leviticus rests on the assumption that God's unique covenantal presence among His set-apart people had geographical implications. *The Mosaic Covenant was a geographical covenant*. God's covenant with Abram (renamed Abraham: "father of nations") involved *land* because it involved *seed*: "In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates" (Gen. 15:18).

God's goal in all of His laws is to place men under certain moral and judicial boundaries. Men are to acknowledge God's absolute sovereignty over them by accepting the authority of His covenant's hierarchy. The stipulations enforced by His hierarchical institutions serve as the legal boundaries of covenant-keeping man's existence. Men are to learn to live within these boundaries. *There is both inclusion and exclusion in establishing and enforcing all boundaries*. God in effect puts a "no trespassing" sign around something, and man is required to honor the stipulations of that sign. If he refuses, God threatens to

9. *Ibid.*, p. 46.

impose negative sanctions on him in history and perhaps even eternity. God is not mocked at zero cost.

E. The Book of the Kingdom

Leviticus is also the book of the kingdom. God delivered His people from bondage in Egypt, a false kingdom. In doing so, He gave them an opportunity to gain land for a new kingdom. The next generation did inherit this land. The generation of the exodus did not. They died in the wilderness. Because of their rebellion and lack of faith, their boundary was the wilderness. They could not return to Egypt, nor could they enter the Promised Land. The kingdom grant of land could be claimed only by their children, and only after their covenant renewal at Gilgal (Josh. 5).

Leviticus presents the rules governing this kingdom grant from God. This land grant preceded the giving of these rules. *Grace precedes law in God's dealings with His subordinates*. We are in debt to God even before He speaks to us. The land grant was based on the original promise given to Abraham. That promise came prior to the giving of the Mosaic law.[10] This is why James Jordan said that the laws of Leviticus are more than legislation; the focus of the laws is not simply obedience to God, but rather on *maintaining the grant*.[11] The basis of maintaining the grant was *ethics*, not the sacrifices. Man cannot maintain the kingdom in sin.[12] The fundamental issue was sin, not sacrifice; ethics, not ritual. God told them this repeatedly through His prophets:

> For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices: But this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you. But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in the counsels and in the imagination of their evil heart, and went backward, and not forward (Jer. 7:22–24).

> To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the LORD: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats.

10. James B. Jordan, *Covenant Sequence in Leviticus and Deuteronomy* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1989), p. 8.

11. *Ibid*., p. 9.

12. *Ibid*., p. 11.

> When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood. Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow (Isa. 1:11–17).

F. The Book of Property Rights

The Book of Leviticus is also the book of property rights in the Pentateuch. The grant of the kingdom was in the form of a land grant. The land itself was the visible manifestation of the historical reality of the kingdom. So was the promised economic prosperity. *Leviticus is the book that presents the ethical foundations of prosperity* (Lev. 26:3–10). It also presents the legal foundations of *judicial peace with God*, the only long-term basis of prosperity. God begins with a gift to His people, and then He sets forth the ritual and legal foundations for maintaining this gift. He promises to uphold this grant if they obey Him. God's promise cannot be separated from their requirement of obedience. Jordan wrote:

> God's covenant Word is always first and foremost promise, and then command based on promise. Point three has to do with God's grant of the Kingdom, His gift and promise, and then our duties consequent thereto. God's Word is always both promise and command, and in Reformed theology, promise comes first. (In Lutheran law/ gospel theology, law comes first to drive us to Christ; but in Reformed theology, grace comes first to put us in the Kingdom, and then the law is given as guidance for our Kingdom duties.)[13]
>
> Respect for the property of others clearly connects largely with the third zone of the five-fold covenant structure, because the third area is that of the distributed grant. We have to respect what God has granted to others. Also, disobedience to any part of God's law is regarded as a trespass or more literally a "debt," as we see it in the Lord's Prayer. Thus, any lawbreaking is a form of theft, creating indebtedness, which must be covered by a Trespass or Compensation Sacrifice. Theft has to do with boundaries, which is why it is equivalent to trespass. Leviticus is the book of bound-

13. *Ibid.*, p. 8.

> aries, of who is allowed to go where, and of how to become cleansed once you have trespassed.[14]

The Book of Leviticus is book three of the Pentateuch. It is the book of property. The eighth commandment, "Thou shalt not steal," is the third law of the so-called second table of the law, i.e., the third law in the second group of five covenantally structured laws. The third commandment, "Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain," establishes a boundary around God's name. God's name is His property, and He in effect licenses the use of His name only for specific uses. The parallels should be obvious. Point three of the biblical covenant model establishes boundaries. Leviticus is the book of property because it is the book of boundaries.

G. A Holy Walk Before the Lord

We now come to a topic that is never discussed by the commentators. I have never seen any commentator devote as much as one page to it, yet it is more important for understanding the unique nature of the economic life of ancient Israel than any other topic. I am not trying to exaggerate; I really mean this. Here is the question that demands an answer: **How did they have time to earn a living?** The mandatory sacrifices ate up time as well as crops. Whatever answers to this question that Israel came up with were fundamental to the life of the nation for almost 14 centuries, yet we do not know how Israel answered it. As far as I know, nobody has discussed in detail the economics of the festival journeys. The rabbis who compiled the Mishna and Talmud in the four centuries after the fall of Jerusalem forgot their ancestors' answers, and Christians have never thought to ask the question.

In Exodus 23, we read: "Three times thou shalt keep a feast unto me in the year. Thou shalt keep the feast of unleavened bread: (thou shalt eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded thee, in the time appointed of the month Abib; for in it thou camest out from Egypt: and none shall appear before me empty:) And the feast of harvest, the firstfruits of thy labours, which thou hast sown in the field: and the feast of ingathering, which is in the end of the year, when thou hast gathered in thy labours out of the field. Three times in the year all thy males shall appear before the Lord GOD" (Ex. 23:14–17). Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles: three feasts a year were required of every adult circumcised male if he was inside the land's boundaries.

14. *Ibid.*, pp. 12–13.

Every adult male had to journey to a central location and participate in a festival (ritual feast) three times a year. A parallel passage promised that during their absence from their homes, no invaders would disturb them: "Thrice in the year shall all your men children [males] appear before the Lord God, the God of Israel. For I will cast out the nations before thee, and enlarge thy borders: neither shall any man desire thy land, when thou shalt go up to appear before the Lord thy God thrice in the year" (Ex. 34:23–24). God promised to bless the land when they honored these requirements. The nation's circumcised adults were on the march three times each year.

1. Centralization

This geographically centralized system of ritual sacrifice was what motivated Jeroboam to create a pair of false worship centers at Bethel and Dan in his newly created northern kingdom (I Kings 12:25–29). He did not want the people of Israel journeying to Judah to worship, for fear that this would divide their loyalty politically (v. 27). He set up a rival altar and a rival Passover celebration at Bethel (v. 32).

We need to understand just how central, and how centralizing, these mandatory sacrifices were. We need to remember this: *there was only one lawful altar in Israel*. Unless there was a way for local religious and civil leaders in a community to represent the entire community at these feasts, which the Bible's texts do not indicate there was, this meant that the entire adult male population—or at least those eligible for numbering for military service—came to Jerusalem a minimum of three times a year, not including their participation in any of the five special sacrifices discussed in Leviticus 1–7.

Most of them had to walk. A few may have had donkeys. Horses cost too much feed and do too little work for small farms to support. There are few references to horses in Israel. They are always spoken of in a military context: the possession of foreign armies. Perhaps some people had donkeys, but riding two hundred miles on a donkey is no picnic. Think about it. Despite rain, mud, dust, and bad weather, three times each year every adult male had to walk or ride a donkey to the tabernacle-temple. In David's day, this meant Jerusalem. Some sections of the nation were located over a hundred miles from Jerusalem "as the crow flies." Winding highways would have added to this estimate. At an average speed of three miles per hour, this would have required up to four or five eight-hour days of walking, each way, plus whatever time was spent in Jerusalem, three times a year. Not every

Israelite had to spend this much time on the road, but members of some tribes did.

2. The Walk: Physical and Spiritual

When God spoke of a holy walk before Him, He really meant it. It was an judicial walk, but it was also a literal walk. *The difficulty of the physical walk was to reflect the difficulty of the spiritual walk.* Life in Israel was to be a kind of boot camp experience—a temporary period of preliminary training for worldwide dominion. In Eden, Adam had been told to *keep away* from a tree: a physically easy task. In Israel, they were told to *journey to* a central location: a physically difficult task. If they walked faithfully, He promised, the land of Israel would make them rich.

> If ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them; Then I will give you rain in due season, and the land shall yield her increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit. And your threshing shall reach unto the vintage, and the vintage shall reach unto the sowing time: and ye shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land safely. And I will give peace in the land, and ye shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid: and I will rid evil beasts out of the land, neither shall the sword go through your land (Lev. 26:3–6;[15] cf. Deut. 28:8–13).

God promised to intervene in the operations of nature in order to make good on His promise. The heavens would deliver rain in due season. But to obtain these blessings, Israelites had to sacrifice—not just offer sacrifices, but sacrifice a large portion of their lives to the boredom of walking. This nation, more than any other non-nomadic nation in history, was to be on the move. Like a literal army, they were to march a minimum of three times a year. Marching was to keep them in good shape, both physical and spiritual, as God's holy army.

At Passover, entire families journeyed to the tabernacle city and later to Jerusalem. Families were required to celebrate the Passover (Ex. 12). They could not celebrate the feast at home, for they were required to slay the Passover lamb on the night Passover began (Ex. 12:6). This had to be done at the appointed national place of worship after they entered the Promised Land (Deut. 16:2–6). There were about 625,000 adult males when they entered the Promised Land (Num. 26:51, 62). This means that about two million people would have arrived in one city at the same time, to spend a week.[16] Imagine

15. Chapter 33.

16. The average Israelite family had approximately two children at this stage in the

four million people arriving. Or perhaps 10 million if the population grew. This did not happen, for God withheld the blessing of population growth, but until the sacrificial system changed, this long walk was required. Then they all walked home.

Mothers today complain about the trouble involved in planning a day's drive or a plane ride, plus a week's visit in a motel. Think about organizing a family for a week's walk, a week's stay, probably camping out in a tent. Bear in mind, there was no running water, no indoor plumbing, no toilet paper, no disposable diapers, and no fast food restaurants. This was no picnic. Then, after a week of jammed masses of humanity and assembly-line sacrifices, they walked home. Less than two months after arriving home, all the men walked back to celebrate another feast, which we call Pentecost: the firstfruits offering. This was Israel's celebration the anniversary of God's giving of the Ten Commandments.[17]

During Pentecost ("weeks") and Tabernacles ("booths"—the feast of ingathering), those eligible to serve in God's holy army arrived in the central place of sacrifice in order to offer their individual sacrifices. The feasts' celebrations were family-centered, with each family inviting in Levites and strangers to share in the festivities (Deut. 16:13–17). During Tabernacles, the altar was used the whole week during the daytime for mandatory national sacrifices (Num. 29:13–34). Pentecost (*pentekoste* is Greek for *fiftieth*) was different; the festival's formal sacrifices were completed on one day—day 50 after Passover (Lev. 23:16). So, the special five sacrifices of Leviticus 1–7 could have been conducted after Pentecost ended. The costs of making the journey were high; the time in Jerusalem was brief; perhaps many people stayed behind to offer these special sacrifices. But Pentecost was a summer festival, when agricultural time is most valuable. For as long as Israel remained predominately agricultural, there would have been economic pressure to return home immediately after Pentecost. Also, the pressure of so many visitors at any festival would have raised food and housing costs. Less busy periods were less expensive, but

nation's history. The number of adult males had been almost the same when they left Egypt (Num. 1:46; 3:43), which meant they had experienced zero population growth. Stable population growth requires a little over two children per family: 2.1 children—one male, one female on average (in monogamous societies). This means that Israel had a national population of about 2.4 million people at the time of the conquest. See Gary North, *Authority and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Exodus* (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, 2012), Part 1: *Representation and Dominion* (1985), ch. 1.

17. Alfred Edersheim, *The Temple: Its Ministry and Services As They Were in the Time of Jesus Christ* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, [1874] 1983), p. 261.

to take advantage of this, the sacrificer would have been required to make another journey to the temple. In short, the costs of sacrifice were very high. Conclusion: faithful people would have been very careful to obey the details of God's law, just to avoid an extra journey to the tabernacle-temple to make a sacrifice for having violated some detail. In the phrase of modern political theory regarding men's exodus from tyranny, Israelites voted with their feet. They marched for liberty. In their case, however, they voted *for* God's covenant order with their feet, not against it.

3. The Challenge to Tribalism

There is another aspect of the three marches, but especially Passover, that must be considered: the mitigating effects on tribalism. The three feasts were national celebrations. Clans and tribes from across the nation were required to meet together in one city: the earthly dwelling place of God where the sacrifices had to be conducted. Loyalty is ultimately to God and His law. This cross-tribal loyalty was to be demonstrated at the national feasts.[18]

When all the families of Israel journeyed to Jerusalem, young adults of marriageable age could meet each other: those of the opposite sex who were members of different tribes.[19] Marriage was not limited to members of the same tribe; it was limited only confessionally. The one judicial pressure to marry inside a tribe was the unique case law that applied only to a family of daughters. They could inherit their father's land, but only if they married within the tribe. This was for the sake of the preservation of land ownership within the tribe, not for theological or spiritual reasons (Num. 36:7).[20] (The existence of the bride price/dowry system was another factor loosening the power of the tribe and the clan. Daughters did not carry title to land with them when they left their fathers' households; instead, they carried transportable capital: gold, silver, jewels, etc. Because this capital was transportable, marriage could cut across clan and tribal boundaries.)[21]

18. The feast still promotes unity across judicial boundaries, acknowledged or not: at the communion table.

19. The denominational college or Bible college has long served a similar function: a place for people of the same accent (in the broadest sense: confession and culture) to send their children to meet and marry others who are outside the local church community.

20. Gary North, *Sanctions and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Numbers*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [1997] 2012), ch. 22.

21. The Mosaic law did not specify who would inherit the wife's dowry upon her death. It is easy to imagine that such funds would go to unmarried sons (bride price assets), daughters (dowries), or unmarried grandchildren.

In a tribally based society, the power of the clan is very great. Ethics tends to be associated with the tribe. "My brother and I against our cousin; my cousin and I against the world." The tribal outlook is "brotherhood over otherhood," insiders over outsiders. Justice is owed only to insiders. The universalism of fixed moral law is denied by such tribal brotherhoods. This is why Mosaic Israel was not primarily tribal; it was confessional-judicial. It was a society based on the historical acts and the revealed laws of a universal God. The tribes had a temporary role to play because of the tribal identification (Judah) of the prophesied Seed-Messiah, Shiloh (Gen. 49:10). The structure of landed inheritance kept citizenship loosely associated with the tribes inside the Promised Land, as we shall see,[22] but the absence of judicial restrictions on marriage outside the tribe, the bride price/dowry system, and the central feasts mitigated the effects of tribalism-clannism.

H. Who Paid? Who Benefitted?

The costs of travel, lodging, food, and forfeited time required to participate in the three festivals were very high. We can only guess at the rents charged in Jerusalem when the city experienced a massive influx of participants. Even upper rooms would have come at a premium price. The farther away from Jerusalem a man lived, the higher these festival expenses were. The festivals took place in the months of agricultural labor, not in the dead of winter. That is, they occurred during periods of very valuable time for agricultural laborers. The value of the alternative uses of a farmer's time was high; thus, the costs of the festivals were high. As we shall see, it is reasonable to estimate that the total costs associated with making sacrifice in Israel were 5% (near Jerusalem) to 15% (distant) of a family's annual income. To this must be added the costs of the sacrifices themselves, plus tithing, gleaning, and giving to the poor. This does not count morally mandatory, zero-interest charitable loans (Deut. 15:7–11).[23]

Edersheim said that the rabbis of the post-Old Covenant era estimated the expenses associated with the required sacrifices and payments, not counting forfeited travel time and personal expenses, at one-quarter of gross income.[24] This does not count the farmer's re-

22. Chapters 15, 17, 24, 29.

23. Gary North, *Inheritance and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Deuteronomy*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [1999] 2012), ch. 36.

24. Edersheim, *Temple*, p. 379.

duced income when the land rested during the sabbatical year. While this estimate of 25% may be too high, there is no doubt that 15% is a reasonable estimate, not counting travel and lodging costs, and not counting forfeited labor time. All of this was required before civil taxes, and not counting the sabbatical year. It is likely that the combined costs of the sacrificial system, plus the system of morally compulsory charity, plus civil taxes at 10% (I Sam. 8:15, 17) would have been in the range of one-third to one-half of an agricultural family's income. This is comparable to the middle-class member's tax burden in the early twenty-first century—a very high-tax era. In the modern world, most of this money goes to various levels of the state. In ancient Israel, most of it went to the priestly tribe and the poor. Theirs was a far better system, but it was expensive. I know of no society in the ancient world with anything like these external costs on the average farmer-citizen.

An Israelite could have chosen to live in a city located closer to Jerusalem, but this would have led to higher real estate prices in those cities. What a man saved in travel costs he paid for in housing costs. The costs of sacrifice had to be borne. There should be no question about it: Old Covenant Israel was an expensive place to live, especially for Israelites.

I. The Farming Subsidy to Resident Aliens

This brings us to a controversial but inescapable conclusion: non-Israelites, who did not have to pay these temple-based costs, had a tremendous economic advantage as farmers in Israel. Except for one year in seven (Deut. 31:10–12), they were not required to attend the feasts. They could invest their time and money into farming while the Israelites were on the march. They were allowed to lease agricultural property from Israelites for up to 49 years (Lev. 25:47–52). This means that there was an indirect economic subsidy in ancient Israel for foreigners and covenant-breakers to occupy the agricultural areas, with the Israelites occupying the cities. Covenant-breakers would have paid rent for rural land to the Israelites who moved to the cities.

The larger that Israelite families became, the smaller and less economically efficient each generation's share of the original family plot. If the jubilee laws were enforced, this must have led to the creation of professionally managed farms along the lines of modern corporate farming. It is likely that non-Israelites eventually would have managed most of these farms, especially in regions remote from Jerusa-

lem, where the implicit subsidy to aliens was greatest, i.e., relief from the costs of the most expensive journeys.

Consider the Jew who lived on one of Israel's distant borders. If he leased his land to a foreigner across the border, he may have been able to afford to move to a city closer to Jerusalem. As a city dweller, he could become a craftsman or trader. His thrice-yearly trips to Jerusalem could have become business-related. He could seek out new goods, new markets, and new business contacts. The division of labor would have been extended. So would the transfer of information. For an urban producer, the festivals could have become economically productive. Economically speaking, there is little doubt that the sacrificial system and the gleaning system (which was strictly agricultural)[25] subsidized the transfer of land stewardship to covenant-breakers, especially near the borders of the nation.

I am not arguing that foreigners actually did occupy most of the rural land in pre-Jeroboam Israel. I do not think they did. I am arguing that if this did not happen, it was because the Israelites ignored biblical laws, especially the jubilee land law. We know they did not obey the sabbatical-year law to rest the land (II Chron. 36:21). Perhaps they did not pay all of the temple fees, or perhaps they paid corporate representatives to attend some of the festivals. Maybe they did not pay their tithes, or else refused to participate in any of the five Levitical sacrifices.

Whatever the case, *the ceremonial laws were designed to move most Israelites off the land and into cities*. If the Israelites as a nation remained on the land, it was because they broke some of these laws, or else they were willing to suffer very high worship-related costs—a very doubtful proposition, given their subsequent behavior.

As far as I know, I am the first commentator to discuss the land ownership aspect of Israel's sacrificial system, and I discovered it only after I had completed two-thirds of the manuscript pages of this book. Having spent almost two decades writing an economic commentary on the first three books of the Bible, at age 51, I finally noticed what should have been obvious all along to any thoughtful investigator: *the festival system subsidized gentiles in the nation*. I say this, not in a self-congratulatory tone, but in shocked humility. What else haven't I figured out? How much don't we know about the actual operations of biblical law in Old Covenant Israel? A very great deal, I suspect. I ask myself: Why don't Bible commentators think economically? Why

25. Chapter 11.

did it take 2,000 years for someone to observe what should have been obvious? Am I completely off the mark about the costs of sacrifice and its economic implications? If so, what am I overlooking? If not, why did it take 2,000 years for someone to write about it? If someone else has written about it, why haven't his observations found their way into any standard Bible commentary or history of Israel?

J. The Import-Export Business

For a farmer in a tribe on the fringes of the nation, the festivals brought immediate costs rather than immediate economic benefits. Only if he became a part-time specialist could he have made these journeys pay at least part of their cost. The obvious means of making the festivals pay would have been to become a middleman in foreign trade. If he purchased high-value, low-volume items from gentiles living across the border, he could sell these in the festival city. High-volume, low-value agricultural goods would have been much less profitable because of transportation costs. He probably would not have been able to sell his own agricultural products to nearby foreign nations in exchange for manufactured goods. They had the same climate. Those nations that were close to Israel's borders would have been "free riders" on the good weather God promised to bring on the land when the nation obeyed Him. The very high ecclesiastical costs of living in Israel would have placed the Israelites at a competitive disadvantage in relation to those foreign farms located close to Israel's border. If anything, Israelites living on the borders of the nation would have had to become manufacturers, trading their goods for imported food and other manufactured goods. Conclusion: inside Israel, journeying Israelites would have been encouraged to exchange manufactured goods or services for other manufactured goods. This would have made Jerusalem a center of trade and information: goods and information brought from the edges of the nation's borders.

In summary, the required feasts created economic incentives for Israelites who were located close to foreign borders to import goods from abroad in exchange for goods produced in Israel, and then use these imports to pay for their mandatory journeys. But they would not have exported any crop that was not unique to Israel: *no comparative advantage*. Israel must have imported goods from abroad in cases where transportation costs were low, especially in regions close to the Mediterranean Sea or close to foreign borders. Why? Because of specialization and the division of labor. Foreign traders could find a

ready market for their goods because of the Israelites' costs of attending the festivals. They would have been looking for goods to trade at the festivals. Foreigners who lived close to roads into Israel or the sea had an economic advantage over other nations that were farther from Israel's borders. It should be clear that *the Mosaic law was designed to move economic activity away from farming toward trade, especially international trade.* The Israelites were then to move out of the land as traders and evangelists across the entire globe.

There would have been an economic incentive for those living near highways to go into the tavern and lodging business. They would therefore have been in the barter business, selling prepared food and lodging for whatever goods the travellers had to offer in exchange. These highway businessmen would have become the local region's middlemen for imported goods.

Those who know anything about late-nineteenth century United States history think of the early immigrant Jews as peddlers, which some were. Jews in medieval Europe were also traders and peddlers. But, given the costs of sacrifice in Israel, a lot of them must have become at least part-time peddlers in ancient Israel. Men try to decrease the net loss from mandatory tasks. Trade would have been one way to achieve this.

K. The International Division of Labor

If a majority of Israelites were not supposed to remain strictly agricultural producers and rural residents, then what were they to do for a living? Where would they live? As population grew, they would have become urban manufacturers, international traders, and specialists in finance: exactly what Jews became when the second diaspora began in A.D. 135, after Bar Kochba's failed rebellion. Rome forced the Jews to move out of Palestine. But from the beginning, Israelites were supposed to become involved in international commerce, both as a national center of trade for visitors and as men sailing across oceans. The economics of centralized sacrifice made this economically likely: cross-border importing and exporting. The laws of Passover allowed those on journeys to celebrate Passover a month later (Num. 9:10–11). This would have been during the harvest season but after winter storms on the Mediterranean. This exception to Passover's laws was a sign of what God wanted for them. They were to take the message of Jehovah's sovereignty and grace to every land, just as Jonah took it to Nineveh. They were to trade and preach. They were to do well while doing good.

Passover alone among the three mandatory festivals had a second date so that travelers could attend. Someone returning to Israel might have been caught in a winter storm. The Mosaic law acknowledged this possibility. This indicates that the other two festivals were not mandatory for Israelites who were outside the nation's geographical boundaries. For those who lived far from the central place of worship but inside the land, and for those living close to the Mediterranean, there was a lawful way to avoid the economic burden of these two festivals' time and travel expenses: become involved in international commerce. The traveler could arrange his affairs to be on a business trip when the two festival dates occurred. The festivals were held in the spring and the fall, when the Mediterranean was suitable for travel.

The extension of God's message of salvation to the rest of the world was inherent in the original covenant. Foreign nations were supposed to learn of God's grace in granting Israel His law (Deut. 4:4–8)?[26] Foreign commerce of one kind or other would have facilitated the spread of the word of God. This was God's conditional promise to them: "[T]hou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow" (Deut. 28:12b)[27]—a blessing better understood by modern Japan than modern America.

Did God really expect the Jews to evangelize the whole world? Yes. But how? What about the Americas? Hadn't God condemned the Western hemisphere to spiritual darkness merely by placing its residents across the Atlantic Ocean? No. Here I must break with the textbook accounts of exploration. On this point, we have been misled.

L. World Trade Before Jerusalem Fell

Rome was a trading nation in the era of the fall of Jerusalem. An important trade existed between Rome and China, based on the exchange of silk for raw materials. Frederick Teggart's extraordinary book, *Rome and China* (1939), discussed this international trade connection,[28] but the topic still receives scant or no attention whatever in the textbooks. In any case, this trade is presumed to have been exclusively overland trade. What the textbooks never discuss is cross-At-

26. North, *Inheritance and Dominion*, ch. 8.

27. *Ibid.*, ch. 69.

28. Frederick J. Teggart, *Rome and China: A Study of Correlations in Historical Events* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood, [1939] 1983). Teggart traced the tight correlation between barbarian invasions in Northern Europe, 58 B.C. to 107 A.D., and (1) Rome's wars on its eastern frontiers and (2) China's wars on its western frontiers. When wars disrupted the silk trade, barbarian invasions soon followed.

lantic trade prior to Columbus. This is a mistake that has only begun to be rectified, most notably by Barry Fell and the diligent members of his Epigraphic Society.

Jews were probably trading in North America as early as Jesus' time, and perhaps centuries earlier. There were traders from Europe in North America in the early second millennium B.C., so this should not be surprising.[29] There is evidence—automatically dismissed as fraudulent ("forgeries") by establishment scholars[30]—that someone brought the message of God's Ten Commandments to the American southwest before the time of Jesus, possibly centuries before. I refer to the inscription, written in a Hebrew "stick" script,[31] which records the decalogue. It was written on a boulder weighing 80 tons, located 30 miles southwest of Albuquerque, New Mexico, near the town of Los Lunas.[32] (This is the correct spelling. The masculine *los* does not match the feminine *lunas*.) The script (alphabet) dates from the twelfth century B.C.[33] Professor Robert Pfeiffer of Harvard University's Semitic Museum first translated the inscription in 1948.[34] A more recent translation than Pfeiffer's is as follows:

> I [am] Yahve your God who brought you out of the land of the two Egypts out of the house of bondages. You shall not have other [foreign] gods in place of [me]. You shall not make for yourself molded or carved idols. You shall not lift up your voice to connect the name of Yahve in hate. Remember you [the] day Sabbath to make it holy. Honor your father and your mother to make long your existence upon the land which Yahve your God gave to you. You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery or idolatry. You shall not steal or deceive. You shall not bear witness against your neighbor testimony for a bribe. You shall not covet [the] wife of your neighbor and all which belongs to your neighbor.[35]

It mentions two Egypts, an obvious reference to the two regions of Egypt, upper (close to the head of the Nile) and lower (close to

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29. Barry Fell, *Bronze Age America* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1982).

30. See "Los Lunas Attracts Epigraphers," *Epigraphic Society Occasional Papers*, XII (Aug. 1985), p. 34.

31. Donald Cline, "The Los Lunas Stone," *ibid.*, X:1 (Oct. 1982), p. 69.

32. David Allen Deal, *Discovery of Ancient America* (Irvine, California: Kherem La Yah, 1984), ch. 1.

33. Barry Fell, "Ancient Punctuation and the Los Lunas Text," *Epigraphic Society Occasional Papers*, XIII (Aug. 1985), p. 35.

34. A photocopy of Pfeiffer's translation appears in Deal, *Discovery*, p. 10.

35. L. Lyle Underwood, "The Los Lunas Inscription," *Epigraphic Society Occasional Papers*, X:1 (Oct. 1982), p. 58.

the Mediterranean).[36] As to when the inscription was made, George Morehouse, a mining engineer, estimated that this could have taken place as recently as 500 years ago and as far back as two millennia.[37] A "revisionist" who studied the inscription in detail believes that the text may be from the era of the Septuagint, i.e., over a century before the birth of Jesus—surely no comfort for conventional textbook authors. The stone's tenth commandment prohibiting covetousness mentions the wife before property, a feature of the Septuagint text.[38]

Evidence of the ancient world's advanced tools, maps,[39] international trade, and highly sophisticated astronomical and observational science[40] never gets into college-level world history textbooks. The evidence is automatically rejected or downplayed by conventional—and woefully uninformed—historians because it breaks with the familiar tenets of cultural evolution. Time is supposed to bring science, technology, and cultural advance. Cultural evolution, not cultural devolution, is supposed to be mankind's legacy to future generations. The thought that international trade across the oceans existed five centuries before Columbus, let alone five centuries before David,[41] is an affront to cultural evolutionists. This is probably why a book like Patrick Huyghe's *Columbus was Last* (1992) had to be published by an obscure New York company, Hyperion. It also explains why there is so little awareness regarding amateur archeologist Emilio Estrada's 1957 discovery of buried Japanese pottery on the coast of Ecuador: Japan's Jomon-era stone-age pottery.[42] Scholars do not want to face the obvious question: How did it get there? And why are there artistic similarities between the China's Shang dynasty and the Mesoamerica Olmec culture—large cats (sometimes without their lower jaws), the

36. *New Bible Dictionary*, 2nd ed. (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House, 1982), p. 302.

37. George E. Morehouse, "The Los Lunas Inscriptions[:] A Geological Study," *Epigraphic Society Occasional Papers*, XIII (Aug. 1985), p. 49.

38. Michael Skupin, "The Los Lunas Errata," *ibid*., XVIII (1989), p. 251.

39. Charles Hapgood, *Maps of the Ancient Sea Kings* (Philadelphia: Chilton, 1966).

40. O. Neugebauer and A. Sachs (eds.), *Mathematical Cuneiform Texts* (New Haven, Connecticut: American Oriental Society, 1945); Neugebauer and Richard A. Parker, *Egyptian Astronomical Texts*, 3 vols. (Providence, Rhode Island: Brown University Press, 1960); Neugebauer, *The Exact Sciences in Antiquity*, 2nd ed. (Providence, Rhode Island: Brown University Press, 1957); Livio C. Stecchini, "Astronomical Theory and Historical Data," in *The Velikovsky Affair: The Warfare of Science and Scientism*, ed. Alfred de Grazia (New Hyde Park, New York: University Books, 1966), pp. 127–70. See also Giorgio de Santillana and Hertha von Dechend, *Hamlet's Mill: An essay on myth and the frame of time* (Boston: Gambit, 1969).

41. Fell, *Bronze Age America*.

42. Patrick Huyghe *Columbus was Last* (New York: Hyperion, 1992), ch. 2.

dragon, and the use of jade—which overlapped each other from the fifteenth to the twelfth centuries, B.C.?[43] Why were the implements and techniques used by the Mayans to make bark paper five centuries before Christ so similar to the implements and techniques used by the Chou dynasty in the same era? Of 121 individual traits, the two systems shared 91, half of which were non-essential, and the other half, while essential, had alternative approaches available.[44] Why didn't the Mesoamerican techniques match papermaking techniques used by cultures in other parts of America?[45] Why do Mayan stone art works after 500 B.C. shift from earlier forms to match Asian art forms of the same era?[46]

Meanwhile, at the other end of the hemisphere, slate technologies have been discovered in burial sites of the ancient Red Paint (red ochre) People in Maine and Labrador. These artifacts match slate technologies in Scandinavia. The era of conjunction was some 4,000 years ago.[47] Huyghe wrote: "The principal deterrent to the notion of historical contact is the widespread belief that ancient man was incapable of making ocean voyages in primitive boats. But there is no doubt that Europeans had oceangoing watercraft quite early. Bronze Age rock carvings in Europe show plank-built ships were sailing Atlantic coastal waters more than 4,000 years ago."[48]

How many people know that the Carthaginians were sending trading ships to North America in the late fourth century B.C.? Throughout the eastern United States, Carthaginian coins that date from the era of 325 B.C. have been discovered near navigable rivers and off the Atlantic coast.[49] Beginning in the late eighteenth century, farmers in New England started digging up hoards of Roman coins[50]. When did these coins arrive? Conventional historians do not bother to ask.

Few people know that numerous commercial bronze replicas of Assyrian deities have been discovered in Cuenca, Ecuador. The Phoenicians were producing these replicas on Cyprus as early as 600 B.C. Carthage, an offshoot of Phoenecia, exported them to barbarian peo-

43. *Ibid.*, p. 84.
44. *Ibid.*, pp. 86–87. See Paul Tolstoy, "Paper Route," *Natural History* (June 1991).
45. *Ibid.*, p. 87.
46. *Ibid.*, pp. 87–91. See Gunnar Thompson, *Nu Sun* (Fresno, California: Pioneer, 1989). Thompson is director of the American Discovery Project at California State University, Fresno.
47. *Ibid.*, pp. 52–54.
48. *Ibid.*, p. 54.
49. Barry Fell, *Saga America* (New York: Times Books, 1980), pp. 25–26, 62, 64.
50. *Ibid.*, p. 27. Cf. Huyghe, *Columbus Was Last*, pp. 97–98.

ples.[51] We know that after 300 B.C., Carthage began to mint electrum coins: mostly gold, but with some silver. Where did Carthage get the gold? These fake deities in South America are evidence that Carthage imported gold from South America through the sale of these replicas.[52] These trips would also explain where Carthage got the pine lumber for building huge warships[53] until the end of the First Punic War with Rome in 241 B.C.[54] (In that war, 264–41 B.C., Carthage lost 334 of these giant ships.)[55] Barry Fell speculated that before the defeat, they had brought trees as ballast from North America, which is why we discover bronze coins here. They bought lumber from the Indians.[56] After 241 B.C., Carthage concentrated on building her army, not her navy. Carthaginian trade with the Americas ceased. So do late-era coins discovered here.

Roman trade replaced Carthaginian trade in North America.[57] Paintings of Roman-Iberian coins appear on cave walls in Arkansas and as far west as Castle Gardens, near Moneta ("money"), Wyoming.[58] There were Iberian-based banks all across North America in the time of Jesus. These contacts continued, and they left traces. "In 1933, an astonished Mexican archeologist excavated a terra-cotta head of a Roman figurine of the third century A.D. from an undisturbed ancient grave sealed under the Calixtlahuaca pyramid, thirty-five miles southwest of Mexico City."[59]

The Carthaginians and Romans were late-comers. The Scandinavians were trading in North America during the Bronze Age, possibly as early as 1700 B.C.[60]—the era of Joseph in Egypt. A visiting Norwegian sailor-king left an account of one of these visits in what is now called Petroglyph Park in Peterborough, Ontario, in Canada. He had an inscription chiseled into rock, written in a nearly universal alphabet of the ancient world, *ogam consaine*,[61] and another alphabet,

51. *Ibid.*, p. 82.

52. *Ibid.*, p. 85.

53. Quinquiremes: five rowers per oar, 250 rowers, 120 marines plus officers: 400 men per ship. *Ibid.*, p. 75.

54. *Ibid.*, p. 76.

55. *Ibid.*, p. 75.

56. *Ibid.*, p. 86.

57. *Ibid.*, chaps. 6, 7.

58. *Ibid.*, pp. 134–35, 144, 148–49, 159–60.

59. Huyghe, *Columbus Was Last*, p. 98.

60. Fell, *Bronze Age America*, ch. 1. The dating is calculated by the zodiac data in the inscription: ch. 5, especially pp. 127, 130.

61. Said to be a gift to man from the Gaulish god Ogimos, god of the occult sciences. *Ibid.*, p. 165.

equally universal, *Tifinag*, an alphabet still employed by the Tuaregs, a Berber tribe in North Africa. The Norse inscription was accompanied by a comment written by an Algonquin Indian scribe in a script common among the pre-Roman Basques, but using a form of the Algonquin language still understood.[62] The inscription was discovered in 1954.[63]

This same Basque script was also employed by the Cree Indians well into the nineteenth century. It was not known to be related to Basque until Fell transliterated into Latin consonants a document written in this "Indian" script. The document had been sent to him by a Basque etymologist who had been unable to decipher it. When it was transliterated, the Basque scholar recognized it as a pre-Roman dialect of the Basque tongue, one which was still in use in the medieval period.[64] Some of the words are virtually the same in both the Algonquin and ancient Basque tongues.[65] (Fell also read Greek, Latin, German, French, Danish, and Gaelic; he had a working knowledge of Sanskrit, Kufic Arabic, and several Asian and African languages.)[66]

A thousand years before the birth of Jesus, Celtic traders[67] were serving as missionaries in North America, bringing the stories of their gods across the continent: central and Western Canada, and as far south as Nevada and California. The petroglyphs of this era reproduce Norse gods whose names are in ogam.[68]

Needless to say, none of this information has moved into college history textbooks. Textbooks include only certain kinds of texts. Textbook authors dismiss all such petroglyph evidence as "forgeries"—the same way they dismiss the texts of the Bible that challenge their concept of chronology. But this is beginning to change. A few academic specialists are beginning to admit that there is something of value in Fell's work.[69] We can therefore predict the traditional three stages of academic surrender: (1) "It isn't true." (2) "It's true, but so what?" (3) "We always knew it was true." As of the first decade of the twenty-first century, we are still in stage one.

62. *Ibid.*, p. 36. For additional information, see Huyghe, *Columbus Was Last*, ch. 5.

63. *Ibid.*, p. 39.

64. *Ibid.*, p. 146. Comparisons of the North American Indian script and the ancient Basque script appear on pages 148–49.

65. *Ibid.*, p. 151.

66. Huyghe, *Columbus Was Last*, p. 59.

67. Fell, *Bronze Age America*, ch. 14.

68. *Ibid.*, chaps. 7–13.

69. Cf. David H. Kelley, "Proto-Tifinagh and Proto-Ogham in the Americas," *Review of Archeology*, XI (Spring 1990).

If Celtic traders were able bring their gods to North America, so were Jewish traders. God expected them to do this. To some extent, they did, as the Los Lunas stone indicates. But they did not do it on a scale that matched the Celts. The requirement that they return for Passover each year must have inhibited their journeys. This was a barrier to world evangelism. It was a temporary barrier. Israel's old wineskins would inevitably be broken because the geographical boundaries of the Mosaic law would eventually be broken if God's law was obeyed. Population growth would have seen to that. So would the cost of journeying to Jerusalem, especially for international Jewish traders. But even if the Mosaic law was disobeyed, those wineskins would be broken. This is what took place definitively with Jesus' ministry, progressively with the establishment of the church, and finally in A.D. 70.[70] The fire on God's earthly altar was extinguished forever.

When, 60 years later, Bar Kochba revolted, the Romans crushed the revolt in 135. There is a continuing stream of archeological discoveries indicating that some of the survivors fled to Tennessee and Kentucky. An early find in Bat Creek, Tennessee by Smithsonian field assistant John Emmert in 1889 is a five-inch stone inscribed with eight Hebrew characters. The significance of this was denied by the Smithsonian's curator, who claimed this was Cherokee syllabic script. As the saying goes, "Nice try, but no cigar"—he had read it upside-down. Over half a century later, Hebrew scholars turned it right-side up and discovered these consonants: LYHWD. In the early 1970s, Brandeis University's Hebraicist Cyrus H. Gordon identified the era of the style of these letters: Bar Kochba's. He translated the phrase: "A comet for the Jews," which was a standard phrase during the revolt. Similar coin finds from this era had been made in Kentucky, which Gordon believed had not been faked.[71]

None of this is in the textbooks. Neither is any reference to the massive 1,375-page two-volume bibliography, *Pre-Columbian Contacts with the Americas Across the Oceans*, which contains over 5,500 entries.[72] For those of you who want to spend a lifetime following the trails into and out of America, here is the place to start.

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70. David Chilton, *The Great Tribulation* (Ft. Worth, Texas: Dominion Press, 1987).

71. Huyghe, *Columbus Came Last*, pp. 98–99. See Cyrus H. Gordon, *Before Columbus: Links Between the Old World and Ancient America* (New York: Crown, 1971).

72. Provo, Utah: Research Press, 1989. Compiled by John L. Sorenson and Martin H. Raish.

M. Jesus' Liberation Theology: More Net Income

Commentators should not ignore the economic burdens for Israelite covenant-keepers prior to Jesus Christ's liberation of His people. When Jesus substituted the mandatory tithe and voluntary offerings for all of the economic burdens of Israel's sacrificial system, He liberated His people. That the vast majority of Christians have always resented paying the tithe shows that they are rebellious at heart. They regard the liberation of the tithe as a threat to their economic autonomy. Their hoped-for economic autonomy is an extension of their hoped-for moral autonomy. The theology undergirding the familiar slogan, "we're under grace, not law," has delivered them into the hands of the tax collectors. The rapacity of today's tax collectors is on a scale undreamed of by the tyrants of the ancient world. Yet Christians continue to re-elect their masters. They cannot discern the difference between tyranny and liberty. They have rejected the authoritative standard by which to judge the difference: God's Bible-revealed law.

I have never seen these economic aspects of Israel's sacrificial system and tithe system discussed by any Bible scholar. This may be because I have not read enough commentaries and academic journals written by higher critics and liberals. I suspect it is because Bible commentators are not trained to think economically.

Contrary to the great Edersheim, who wrote that "the Law seems to regard Israel as intended to be only an agricultural people,"[73] the Mosaic law pressured Israelite families off their farms and into the cities. The eschatological task of filling of the earth is for mankind to bring all of nature under man's dominion: the dominion covenant (Gen. 1:27–28). So was the economic pressure of Mosaic Israel. Mosaic laws that dealt with the land, the tribes, and the sacrifices were designed to be temporary. As the population of Israel grew as a result of God's covenantal blessings,[74] the Israelites would have had to move out of the land into the cities, and then out of Israel into the world: away from Jerusalem. The centralized structure of temple sacrifice and worship would have become impossible to maintain. The Mosaic laws governing worship and sacrifice pointed to their annulment: the sooner, the better for a growing, prospering, urbanized population.

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73. Edersheim, *Temple*, p. 379.

74. North, *Authority and Dominion*, ch. 1: "Population Growth: Tool of Dominion"; ch. 55: "The Curse of Zero Growth"; Appendix B: "The Demographics of Decline."

Conclusion

The Book of Leviticus is the book of holiness. It is the book of boundaries: ethical, familial, tribal, liturgical, cultural, and geographical. It is the book of ownership, property, and sacrifice. It probably is the most difficult book in the Bible to explain, verse by verse. That a commentary devoted only to the economics of Leviticus should be this large testifies to the problem. That my commentary is the first one ever written on this aspect of Leviticus also testifies to the problem. The commentators have ignored Leviticus for too long. Their prudence has come at a very high price.

Israel was to be a nation of priests (Ex. 19:6). The priests lived and worked in the holy city, just as the Levites lived in walled cities (Lev. 25:32–33). The earth is to be filled by city-dwellers. Nature is to be subdued by the nearby presence of myriads of men: the domestication of nature. To reverse a popular slogan of the ecology movement: "In wildness is the damnation of the world." The people of God are to dwell in the city of God. This does not mean that there should be no gardens in cities. The tree of life is in the midst of the perfect city (Rev. 22:2). But it does mean that the city is fundamental; the garden is supplemental.[75]

The economic pressure on Israelites to move from the farm to the city was basic to Levitical law. The closer that a man lived to Israel's holy city, the less time he had to spend on the road. If he had to spend time on the road, he might as well become a traveling salesman. The Israelites were pressured economically by the laws of the festivals and the sacrifices to become a nation of traders. The economic laws of Leviticus also pressured the farmers of Israel to move into the cities. The residents of cities were in turn pressured to become international traders. This does not mean that there were to be no Israelite farmers in Israel, but there can be no doubt that the general thrust of the economic incentives under the Mosaic law's system of costs and benefits was to move God's covenant people off the farms and into the cities. They were to become a nation of manufacturers, shopkeepers, traders, and bankers—an early version of what England became in the nineteenth century. They were also to become a nation of foreign

75. Christianity is at war with paganism. "Pagan" means "rustic, villager." Christianity triumphed in the cities of Rome; rural villages resisted. "Pagan," *Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford University Press, 1971). Rural people clung to belief in animistic local gods. The public resurrection of occultism in the West after 1965 has been accompanied by the resurrection of earth worship, animism, and a self-consciously pagan environmentalist movement.

missionaries. If there is a unique thesis found in this commentary, this is it. I break definitively with the standard interpretation of the Hebrews as a rural people, which implies that their laws were not designed for an urban society.

In this book, I refer to laws, case laws, and statutes. Following Rushdoony's lead in *Institutes of Biblical Law*, I define a biblical case law as a Bible-revealed statute that applies a general principle of biblical law to a specific case. Rushdoony wrote that "the law, *first*, lays down broad and basic principles," but there is also "a *second* characteristic of Biblical law, namely, that the major portion of the law is *case law*, i.e., the illustration of the basic principle in terms of specific cases. These specific cases are often illustrations of the extent of the application of the law; that is, by citing a minimal type of case, the necessary jurisdictions of the law are revealed."[76] God has provided us with *case laws in advance* in the form of *legally binding statutes*. A case law illustrates a general legal principle, making this principle clearer by making it specific. God, as the sovereign Legislator, is also the sovereign Judge. Thus, biblical laws are simultaneously statute laws and case laws.

This usage does not conform to legal terminology in the United States. The modern humanist legal theorist defines a case law as a judge-made law that serves as a legal precedent. He regards case laws as the products of specific legal disputes, in contrast to statute laws enacted by legislatures. The modern dichotomy between case laws and statute law reflects the dichotomy between humanistic English common law, which floats on legal precedents announced by self-proclaimed autonomous judges, and Continental Europe's humanistic Napoleonic code, which floats on legal enactments announced by self-proclaimed autonomous legislatures.[77] Ultimately, this dichotomy reflects the autonomy in all humanist thought between historical flux and fixed principles of logic: Heraclitus ("all is in flux") vs. Parmenides ("logic is constant"). Neither approach solves the problem of discovering binding fixed principles of law that can be applied to a changing world. The Bible provides this; humanistic law schools do not.

76. R. J. Rushdoony, *The Institutes of Biblical Law* (Nutley, New Jersey: Craig Press, 1973), p. 11.

77. Cf. A. V. Dicey, *Introduction to the Study of the Law of the Constitution*, 8th ed. (Indianapolis, Indiana: Liberty/Classics, [1915] 1982), esp. Chapter 12.

INTRODUCTION TO PART I: SACRIFICES (LEV. 1–7)

And they shall no more offer their sacrifices unto devils, after whom they have gone a whoring. This shall be a statute for ever unto them throughout their generations. And thou shalt say unto them, Whatsoever man there be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers which sojourn among you, that offereth a burnt offering of sacrifice, And bringeth it not unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, to offer it unto the Lord*; even that man shall be cut off from among his people. And whatsoever man there be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, that eateth any manner of blood; I will even set my face against that soul that eateth blood, and will cut him off from among his people. For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul. Therefore I said unto the children of Israel, No soul of you shall eat blood, neither shall any stranger that sojourneth among you eat blood.*

LEVITICUS 17:7–12

Sacrifice is an inescapable concept. It is never a question of "sacrifice vs. no sacrifice." It is always this question: Sacrifice to whom? And also this subordinate question: Which kind of sacrifice?

The Bible makes it clear that fallen man owes his sacrifices to the God of creation. This is the absolutely sovereign God who rules in heaven and on earth, in eternity and time. The five sacrifices of Leviticus 1–7 were required because of the absolute holiness of an absolutely sovereign God. Men have broken God's law. As unholy covenant-breakers, they are in need of means of covenant renewal. The first point of the biblical covenant model, *transcendence/immanence*, appears in Leviticus in the section that presents laws establishing the five types of common sacrifice. These five sacrifices were not the mandatory corporate sacrifices associated with the national covenant renewal festivals of Passover, Pentecost (firstfruits), and Tabernacles,

but rather the sacrifices of personal and familial covenant renewal that were available to the faithful.

Because the judicial foundation of covenant renewal between God and man is ethics rather than ritual precision, the prophets made it clear that God would pay no attention to the sacrifices of covenant-breakers who persisted in their rebellion. "Behold, ye trust in lying words, that cannot profit. Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods whom ye know not; And come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, We are delivered to do all these abominations?" (Jer. 7:8–10). Micah added rhetorically, "Wherewith shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Mic. 6:6–8). *Ethics is primary*; this is why the laws governing the sacrifices are found in book three of the Pentateuch: Leviticus, the book of holiness. They are not found in book four: Numbers, the Pentateuch's book of sanctions.[1]

A. Holiness and Sacrifice

Before we begin an analysis of the meaning of the five sacrifices of Leviticus 1–7, we must have an understanding of the role of the tribe of Levi in Mosaic Israel. The Levites were the guardians of the sacramental boundaries (Num. 18). The family of Aaron within the tribe of Levi served as the priests, i.e., those who actually performed the sacrifices. They had legal access to the inner area of the temple that was closed even to the Levites. The high priest once a year had access to the holy of holies (Ex. 30:10). Thus, the ultimate boundaries in Mosaic Israel were judicial-spatial.[2] The temple, the place where the Ark of the Covenant resided—the royal residence of the God on earth—was supremely holy, geographically speaking.[3] Inside the Ark were the two tables of the law: the Ten Commandments (Deut. 31:9, 26). The

1. Gary North, *Sanctions and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Numbers*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point five Press, [1997] 2012).

2. These boundaries ended forever with the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

3. Meredith G. Kline, *Images of the Spirit* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker, 1980), pp. 39–42.

holiest place on earth was where the original records of God's covenantal law rested. The *judicial links* among God's written law, Israel's national and cultural boundaries, Israel's holiness, and the priestly tribe of Levi constitute the central message of the Book of Leviticus.

What about the economics of Leviticus? We begin with this observation: based on God's ownership of both the land (Lev. 25:23) and the Israelites (Lev. 20:26), He established a unique set of property rights over Israel and inside Israel. As is true in all cases of property rights, these rights were marked by a series of legal boundaries. The Book of Leviticus, the third book in the Pentateuch, is most closely associated with these boundaries.[4]

B. The Five Year-Round Sacrifices

There are five year-round sacrifices in Leviticus. Like the three mandated festival-feasts (Lev. 23),[5] all five sacrifices had to be offered to God at a central location. To get to this central location, most of the Israelites had to walk.

All five of these Levitical sacrifices had to be cut into pieces or divided before they were placed on the altar. Only the Passover lamb was placed on the altar whole. Its flesh was first penetrated, allowing the blood to flow out (Ex. 12:7), but there is no mention that it was to be cut into pieces before roasting.[6] This is consistent with the New Testament's identification of Jesus Christ as the Passover lamb (I Cor. 5:7): His body was not broken by the Roman guards, although one of them pierced His flesh with a spear (John 19:32–37).

The first section of Leviticus, chapters 1–7, deals with ritual offerings and the labor of the priests. James Jordan divided Leviticus into five sections: (1) the sacrifices, five in number[7] (Lev. 1–7); (2) the cleansing of God's house (Lev. 8–16); (3) holy living before the Lord (Lev. 17–22); (4) holy times or feasts (Lev. 23); and (5) the historical perspective (Lev. 24–27).[8] I divide Leviticus differently:

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4. The third commandment establishes a boundary around God's name: "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain" (Ex. 20:7a). The eighth commandment (the third in the second table of the law) establishes property rights: "Thou shalt not steal" (Ex. 20:15).

5. Introduction, pp. 12–19.

6. "And they roasted the passover with fire according to the ordinance: but the other holy offerings sod they in pots, and in caldrons, and in pans, and divided them speedily among all the people" (II Chron. 35:13).

7. Burnt offerings (Lev. 1), cereal offerings (Lev. 2), peace offerings (Lev. 3), purification offerings (Lev. 4:1), and compensation offerings (Lev. 5:14, 6:1).

8. James B. Jordan, *Covenant Sequence in Leviticus and Deuteronomy* (Tyler, Texas: In-

1. The five sacrifices (Lev. 1–7)
2. The priestly, hierarchical cleansing of God's house and man's house, including the land—a means of deliverance (Lev. 8–16)
3. Laws of separation (Lev. 17–22)
4. Covenant-renewal festivals and covenant-breaking acts (Lev. 23–24)
5. Inheritance (Lev. 25–27)

The five-fold system of sacrifices parallels the five-point covenant.[9] Wrote Jordan:

> The sacrifices that occupy the first seven chapters are themselves arranged by this pattern. The first section, chapters 1–3, concerns the relationship between God and man directly: The Burnt Offering afirmed God's transcendence, the Cereal or Tribute Offering afirmed the Israelite's fealty to God, and the Peace Offering afirmed God's fellowship with man. The Purification Offering had to do not with cleansing the individual sinner, but with cleansing God's house, society at large, which was symbolically defiled by the presence of sinners. The house of God was the place of mediation, so appropriately the Purification Offering is discussed next. The Compensation Offering had two purposes: to deal with theft (point three) and with perjury (point four). finally, the last point of the covenant/re-creation sequence has to do with succession, the appointment of servants to continue the work begun by the master.[10]

By structuring the five offerings in terms of the five points of the biblical covenant, God reminded the Israelites of their covenantal obligations. Let us review this structure.

First, except for the hide, which was retained by the priest (Lev. 7:8), the whole burnt offering was completely consumed; none of the edible portion remained in the possession of men, either the priests or the offerer. This pointed to God's complete *transcendence*. The hide, like the hides in which God wrapped Adam and Eve (Gen. 3:21), testified to God's *presence* with them in history.

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stitute for Christian Economics, 1989), pp. 15–17. It is interesting that John E. Hartley as found a five-part message in Leviticus: God's holiness, presence, covenant, sacrifice, and continuity with the New Testament. Hartley, *Leviticus*, vol. 4 of *Word Bible Commentary* (Dallas, Texas: Word Books, 1992), pp. lvi–lxiii. Using the five-point covenant structure, I would rearrange the list: God's presence (as in transcendence/presence), covenant (which Hartley identifies with God's deliverance of Israel from bondage, i.e., historical prologue), holiness (boundaries), sacrifice (sanctions), and continuity with the New Testament. Hartley sees a six-part division in Leviticus: *ibid.*, p. xxxiv. He also refered to rival theories: two sections, four sections, and nine sections. *Ibid.*, p. xxxii. He does not mention five sections.

9. Ray R. Sutton, *That You May Prosper: Dominion By Covenant* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, [1987] 1995).

10. Jordan, *Covenant Sequence*, p. 22.

Second, the grain offering represented point two of the covenant. This offering pointed back to the *historical prologue* (associated with point two)[11] of the nation: the exodus events. As with the Passover meal of the exodus, this offering could not be leaven (Lev. 2:4). Point two is also associated with the *covenant* itself, just as Exodus, the second book of the Pentateuch, is called the book of the covenant (Ex. 24:7). The grain offering was the unique offering of the covenant, for it was associated with salt, a mineral used to flavor or preserve something or else destroy it, e.g., salting the land (Jud. 9:45): *the salt of the covenant*. Salt was specifically associated with the grain offering. "And every oblation of thy meat [meal] offering shalt thou season with salt; neither shalt thou suffer the salt of the covenant of thy God to be lacking from thy meat [meal] offering: with all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt" (Lev. 2:13).

Third, the peace (well-being) offering, dealt with *boundaries*: how covenant-keeping man can lawfully cross the boundaries and come into God's presence in a shared meal. The priests—guardians of the boundaries of holy places and things—ate part of it (Lev. 7:14–15, 32–34). The offerer ate part of it, so long as he or she was ritually clean (Lev. 7:19). To violate this rule was to create a new judicial boundary: "But the soul that eateth of the flesh of the sacrifice of peace offerings, that pertain unto the Lord, having his uncleanness upon him, even that soul shall be cut off from his people" (Lev. 7:20).

Fourth was the sin (purification) offering. It was offered in order to avoid God's *sanctions*. The vessel in which it was prepared was either smashed or scoured afterward (Lev. 6:28).

Fifth, there was the trespass (reparations) offering. The priest kept the skin of the animal (Lev. 7:9). Animal skins were also God's gift to Adam and Eve just before they were cast out of the garden (Gen. 3:21). These skins were the coverings that would preserve them: a testimony to God's grace to them by providing a *future*.

C. Atonement for Sin, Not Food for God

Milgrom pointed out that all the food sacrifices were to be performed where laymen could view them: on the outer altar in the open court-

11. Meredith G. Kline, *Treaty of the Great King: The Covenant Structure of Deuteronomy: Studies and Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1963), pp. 52–61. See also Kline, *The Structure of Biblical Authority*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1972), pp. 53–57.

yard.[12] This courtyard was open to all Israelites.[13] These sacrifices were public acts. Speaking of the altar of incense, which was inside the tent or tabernacle, God said: "Ye shall offer no strange incense thereon, nor burnt sacrifice, nor meat offering; neither shall ye pour drink offering thereon" (Ex. 30:9). The sacrifices were for the benefit of the nation. They were not for "the care and feeding of God"—a fundamental error of Mesopotamian religion generally.[14]

The sacrifices atoned for men's sins. This also meant cleansing. "For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the LORD" (Lev. 16:30). By appeasing God through sacrifice, the nation was enabled to escape God's wrath in history. But the fundamental sacrifice is always ethical: avoiding sin after payment to God has been made. That is to say, the essence of acceptable sacrifice is ethical holiness, just as the judicial foundation of holiness is sacrifice.

12. Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, vol. 3 of *The Anchor Bible* (New York: Doubleday, 1991), p. 59.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 148. He provided a suggested sketch of the outer court, which was separate from, but contiguous to, the tent and the inner court: p. 135.

14. *Idem.*

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SACRIFICE, STEWARDSHIP, AND DEBT

> *And the* Lord *called unto Moses, and spake unto him out of the tabernacle of the congregation, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, If any man of you bring an offering unto the* Lord, *ye shall bring your offering of the cattle, even of the herd, and of the flock. If his offering be a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish: he shall offer it of his own voluntary will at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the* Lord. *And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering; and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him.*
>
> LEVITICUS 1:1–4

To understand any biblical law, we should first seek to discover its theocentric meaning. The theocentric meaning of every law governing sacrifice is God as the sanctions-bringer: point four of the biblical covenant.[1]

A. The Law of the Sacrifices

What does this law have to do with God and His relation to man? James Jordan argued that the whole burnt sacrifice symbolized *the death of the sacrificer*. This death was *imputed judicially* to the animal.

> What actually happens is that the animal becomes dead. It is death, the penal judgment for sin, that is put on the animal. The man is given life, a new beginning, because the animal takes the death he deserves. The effect of the sacrifice of the animal is that the believer's guilt and sin are removed, but what is transferred to the animal is the sinner's liability to death.

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1. Ray R. Sutton, *That You May Prosper: Dominion By Covenant*, 2nd ed. (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, [1987] 1992), ch. 4. Gary North, *Unconditional Surrender: God's Program for Victory* (Powder Springs, Georgia: American Vision, 2010), ch. 4.

> Death is both primordial and eschatological. Adam rejected the Tree of Life in order to commit sin, so he chose death before he sinned. Death is also the eschatological punishment for sin—those who choose death are given death. Man's death-nature is the wellspring of his sin, so death must be dealt with before sin is. To put this in systematic-theological language: justification comes before sanctification. Justification is initial, juridical *life*, which leads to a life of holiness, and culminates in glorification: eschatological *life*.
>
> What the sacrifice removes is not sin but death, the judgment for sin. Death having been removed, it is now possible to live a righteous life.[2]

Leviticus begins with the law governing the burnt offering. "A male without blemish" was required, which was also the requirement for the Passover lamb: "Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats" (Ex. 12:5). The phrase, "without blemish," is repeated throughout Leviticus.[3] The blemish-free sacrificial animal symbolized God's requirement of a final sacrifice that alone serves as a legal ransom payment (atonement)[4] to God for man's sin. Peter wrote:

> Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God (I Peter 1:18–21).

The requirement of a blemish-free sacrifice meant that the individual who was seeking a legal eradication of the legal effects of sin could not expect to attain it at a discount. He had to forfeit something of obvious value. He could not offer an imperfect, less valuable animal and still expect to please God. The offering had to cost him something: an animal with higher market value than a blemished an-

2. James Jordan, "The Whole Burnt Sacrifice: Its Liturgy and Meaning," *Biblical Horizons Occasional Paper*, No. 11, p. 4.

3. Leviticus 1:10; 3:1,6; 4:23,28,32; 5:11,18; 6:6; 9:2–3; 14:10; 22:19; 23:12,18. It also appears repeatedly in Numbers.

4. Wenham said that the Hebrew word *kippur*, "to make atonement," may be derived from one of two words. One means "ransom price," and the other means "to wipe away." The ransom price was the money a legally condemned man could pay to escape the death penalty (Ex. 21:30; Prov. 6:35). In some passages, the former seems more appropriate (Ex. 30:15; Num. 31:50). The latter seems more appropriate in passages that deal with the altar (Lev. 15:33). Gordon J. Wenham, *The Book of Leviticus* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1979), p. 28.

imal. David later declared: "Nay; but I will surely buy it of thee at a price: neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the Lord my God of that which doth cost me nothing. So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver" (II Sam. 24:24).[5] A later generation of Israelites broke this law by offering blind, lame, and sick animals (Mal. 1:8).

The same principle of costly sacrifice applied to the grain offerings: "And when any will offer a meat [meal] offering unto the Lord, his offering shall be of fine flour; and he shall pour oil upon it, and put frankincense thereon" (Lev. 2:1). (This rule did not apply to sacrifices involving birds, presumably for the sake of the poor.)[6]

B. A Blemish-Free Sacrifice

I begin with the question: In what way does this law reflect the character of God? Second, in what way does this law reflect God's relationship with man, especially fallen man?

The whole burnt offering was the first of five Levitical sacrifices. This sacrifice established two legal principles. First, God deserves the best we have to offer: a blemish-free male sacrifice. Second, God places limits on our mandated sacrifices: men owed God only one animal. So, while the blemish-free male sacrifice testified to the Israelites' *total* indebtedness to God, the requirement of only one animal placed *limits on the sense of guilt* and obligation. We are not supposed to become paralyzed by the thought of our total depravity. We are not asked by God to burn up everything we own in a hopeless quest to placate Him with acts of personal sacrifice. We owe Him far too much for such futile acts of self-sacrifice to repay our massive debts.

When we offer a blemish-free male sacrifice to God, God acknowledges this as a *representative act of our total submission* to Him as absolutely sovereign. A blemish-free male sacrifice publicly symbolizes our acknowledgment of our total dependence on His absolutely sovereign mercy. In Leviticus 1, this blemish-free male sacrifice was a bull. In the New Covenant, this male sacrifice was Jesus Christ (Heb. 9).

As we shall see in this chapter, any attempt to offer a blemished sacrifice is a judicially representative assertion of man's own partial autonomy: a denial of man's total depravity and also God's absolute

5. David paid 600 shekels of gold for the land (I Chron. 21:25). The 50 shekels were the price of the oxen.

6. Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, vol. 3 of *The Anchor Bible* (New York: Doubleday, 1991), p. 167.

sovereignty. On the other hand, any attempt to offer more than what is required is also an assertion of man's partial autonomy: a declaration that men are capable of paying God everything they owe Him out of their own assets.[7]

Whenever men seek to evade either principle of the law governing the first Levitical sacrifice, they will soon find themselves in bondage to a god of their own making. This god will always establish boundaries. Those who dwell inside these boundaries will receive the god's mercy; those outside these boundaries will receive the god's wrath. This god will become progressively merciless toward some and indulgent toward others. In our day, this god is the state. The modern state is progressively merciless toward covenant-keepers and progressively indulgent toward covenant-breakers.

C. Substitute Sacrifices

We are incapable of buying our own salvation. We are therefore required to acknowledge ritually the purchase of our salvation by the Son of God. This ritual sacrifice is not economically empty, however; it involves suffering a loss. Biblically, it involves the whole of our lives: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Rom. 12:1).[8] The required animal sacrifices of the Old Covenant were merely token payments—judicial and economic representations—of man's required sacrifice of his whole life.[9]

The Israelite was told that he had to bring a blemish-free animal to God's altar. He was not permitted to substitute a less valuable animal. God would not tolerate anything but the best of the flock. Wenham wrote: "Only the best is good enough for God."[10] This pointed to the magnitude of God's own sacrifice: the best of His "flock," the very Lamb of God.

From the day that Cain offered an agricultural sacrifice rather than an animal sacrifice, men have attempted to substitute unacceptable

7. Gary North, *Authority and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Exodus* (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, 2012), Part 3: *Tools of Dominion* (1990) *ch.* 56.

8. Gary North, *Coorperation and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Romans*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2000] 2012), ch. 8.

9. The Communists in their formative years fully understood this biblical principal of sacrifice, a fact reflected by the title of Communist defector Benjamin Gitlow's study of American Communism, *The Whole of Their Lives* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1948).

10. Wenham, *Leviticus*, p. 51.

sacrifices of their own choosing. This substitution symbolically asserts man's sovereignty in the transaction. Man also sometimes offers "discount" sacrifices. God rejects them. "Ye said also, Behold, what a weariness is it! and ye have snuffed at it, saith the LORD of hosts; and ye brought that which was torn, and the lame, and the sick; thus ye brought an offering: should I accept this of your hand? saith the LORD. But cursed be the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and voweth, and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing: for I am a great King, saith the LORD of hosts, and my name is dreadful among the heathen" (Mal. 1:13–14).

A prohibited sacrifice might also be an expensive sacrifice. Cain did in fact bring something to God's altar; for all we know, it was the best of his crop. But it is not simply the *value* of the sacrifice that God has in mind; it is the *specific character* of the sacrifice. In Cain's case, God required a blood offering. When a blood offering was required, there could be no lawful substitution of a less valuable animal, let alone a forbidden animal or a grain offering.

God did eventually accept a physically blemished sacrifice, a sacrifice with stripes or welts. It was an *ethically clean* sacrifice but a *physically blemished* one. As Isaiah said, "he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed" (Isa. 53:5). This unique sacrifice was born blemish-free, lived blemish-free, but died visibly blemished. This sacrifice alone in history was lawfully brought to God's altar in a blemished condition: lawfully for God, but unlawfully for the courts that tried Him.[11] These blemishes represented the results of man's sin—negative sanctions imposed by a court (Matt. 27:26)—and Jesus Christ on Calvary became sin for us representatively. "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (II Cor. 5:21).

By offering anything except the best of his flock, the Israelite was declaring ritually that his sin was really not so great in God's eyes, and therefore the price that God would ask the Messiah to pay in man's stead would not be excessive. This was another way of saying that the negative sanctions that God imposes on sin are not really absolute. In short, *this was an assertion of man's ability to pay for his own sins*. By of-

11. That which was evil for men to do—offering a blemished sacrifice—resulted in that which was not only acceptable before God but actually predestined by God from the beginning. This two-fold character of the atonement process was also present in Judas' betrayal: "And truly the Son of man goeth, as it was determined: but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed!" (Luke 22:22).

fering a substandard, prohibited sacrifice, the atonement-seeker was saying that the magnitude of his own sin was not so great that the leftovers of his flock could not serve as a lawful payment in God's court.

Except in the case of birds, the texts required that the sacrificed animals be unblemished, meaning valuable. Nevertheless, the whole burnt offering was a limited sacrifice: only one animal was required, not the whole flock. Mosaic man was reminded that he dare not try to cheat God by offering a blemished sacrifice, for he owed God everything; nevertheless, he was not to deceive himself by offering everything he owned in a vain attempt to buy his salvation.

D. Public Sacrifice and Implicit Stewardship

Because a covenant-keeping man in Israel offered the best of his flock as a token of God's absolute ownership of both him and his flock, *he thereby retained lawful title in God's court to everything that remained in his possession*. His life and his possessions were no longer tainted, for his representative sacrificial act removed God's curse in history. By sacrificing the best of his flock, he re-established his claim of legitimate ownership in God's court. Because he personally bore the economic loss, he established lawful title to future benefits from his property. Only someone who has the legal authority to *disown* a piece of property can accurately be said to own it.[12] An Israelite disowned his representative animal—the best of his flock—by sacrificing it. He publicly acknowledged in principle that he owed God everything he owned, and that whatever he retained, he retained by God's grace as a steward in history. His sins were judicially covered in God's historical court, and therefore his remaining property was to be retained under his lawful control as God's steward.

Had he sacrificed a low-value animal, he would have been symbolically asserting that God had lawful title to only the dregs of his capital assets, the leftovers. This would have constituted a rebellion on his part: the theft of God's property, meaning the public repudiation of his delegated position as God's steward. *But this stewardship cannot legally be repudiated*. Man is still held responsible by God for the faithful administration of God's property. Stewardship is therefore an inescapable concept. It is never a question of "stewardship vs. no stewardship"; it is always a question of *stewardship for whom*. This is why Jesus warned, "No man can serve two masters: for either he will

12. F. A. Harper, *Liberty: A Path to Its Recovery* (Auburn, Alabama, Mises Institute, [1949] 2007), p. 106.

hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Matt. 6:24).[13] But we cannot serve no master, either. We have to serve someone or something: point two of the biblical covenant.

When we identify the sovereign agent for which men work as economic stewards, we have identified the god of that particular society. Beginning in the mid-eighteenth century, the right wing of the Enlightenment[14] proclaimed the free market as the institutional master, which in the twentieth century was labeled consumers' sovereignty,[15] but which is more accurately described as *customers' authority*. Sovereignty is an aspect of the judicial order (legal ownership), not the economy (asset allocation). Producers are property owners and therefore equally sovereign. But they possess far less economic authority than customers, who own the most marketable commodity: money. Also beginning in the eighteenth century, the left wing of the Enlightenment proclaimed the state as the institutional master (citizens' sovereignty). In each case, the Enlightenment proclaimed *autonomous man* as the judicial sovereign: the ultimate owner.[16] The question then became: Which institution best represents this new sovereign: the free market or the state?[17] Christians ever since have chosen sides between

13. Gary North, *Priorities and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Matthew*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2000] 2012), ch. 14: "Rival Masters, Rival Kingdoms."

14. The Scottish Enlightenment: Adam Ferguson, David Hume, Adam Smith, etc. See Gary North, *Hierarchy and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on First Timothy*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2001] 2012), Appendix C: "Adam Smith's Theory of Economic Sanctions."

15. The man who coined the phrase was the British-born South African economist William H. Hutt. See Hutt, "The Nature of Aggressive Selling," *Economica* (1935); reprinted in *Individual Freedom: Selected Works of William H. Hutt*, eds. Svetozar Pejovich and David Klingaman (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood, 1975), p. 185. Ludwig von Mises adopted it: "The economic foundation of this bourgeois system is the market economy in which the consumer is sovereign." Mises, "The Economic Foundations of Freedom," *The Freeman* (April 1960); reprinted in Mises, *Economic Freedom and Interventionism*, ed. Bettina Bien Greaves (Irvington-on-Hudson, New York: Foundation for Economic Education, 1990), p. 4. The idea is consumer supremacy. "What matters is not the behavior of the entrepreneurs but the supremacy of the consumers." Mises, "Inequality of Wealth and Incomes," *Ideas on Liberty* (May 1955); reprinted in *ibid*., p. 46.

16. Chapter 4:O.

17. A parallel argument took place after Darwin's *Origin of Species* (1859). Social Darwinism was divided between the defenders of the free market social order and the statists. The former—most notably Herbert Spencer and William Graham Sumner—based their defense on the competitive nature of free market capitalism, which, they argued, is analogous to a ruthless, unplanned, directionless, evolving nature. Autonomous nature is to be the model for society, they believed. The statists—most notably Lester Frank Ward—counter-argued that human society has now superseded the rule

these rival humanist viewpoints. They have not gone to the Bible in search of another approach. This is why my economic commentary represents a radical break with the past.

Consider the comparative political appeal of these rival doctrines of final earthly sovereignty. The state rules by the monopolistic sword, while the market is dependent on this sword to adjudicate and then enforce disputed contracts.[18] The state concentrates power; the market diffuses power. The state's representation of sovereign power is publicly visible;[19] the market's representation of subordinate power is confined to such emblems as profit-and-loss statements, balance sheets, and share prices on a stock market. The state's manifestation of power is easily understood by the average man; the market's manifestation of power is understood only through complex chains of highly specialized economic reasoning. In the struggle to gain public allegiance, and therefore moral legitimacy, the state has most of the advantages most of the time. *If the state is not restrained by a theology of God's primary sovereignty, it will threaten man with servitude in history*. What man grants to the state theologically he will pay for economically.

The whole burnt offering symbolized God's primary ownership and man's stewardship under God. Whatever man owns has been granted to him by God. *Whenever the doctrine of sovereignty is transferred*

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of once-planless nature, just as the brain of man has superseded all other brains in nature, and therefore a scientific elite can successfully direct the social evolutionary process through the application of state power. Gary North, *Sovereignty and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Genesis* (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [1982] 2012), Appendix A.

18. Bruce L. Benson presented a case for a society without civil courts: *The Enterprise of Law: Justice Without the State* (San Francisco, California: Pacific Research Institute for Public Policy, 1990). The judicial problem is that some disputes can be resolved only through the imposition of sanctions or the threat thereof. Who has the authority to impose such sanctions within a geographical area? Which laws are legitimate? Which sanctions are legitimate? What is to prevent the development of a warlord society if the principle of civil sanctions is not honored?

19. There is a link between totalitarianism and military symbols. The two major totalitarian societies of the mid-twentieth century, Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, had annual parades where tanks rolled and soldiers marched. Sociologist Robert Nisbet wrote: "The final attribute of totalitarianism that tends to be emphasized in conservative analyses since Burke is the militarization of culture and society. . . . Once Trotsky took on the responsibility of transmuting the Czarist into the Red Army, military symbols began to burgeon. The military tunic received a value in society it had never held before; so did military rank in all councils of government. . . . Far more important than actual war in mobilizing a population is war-society, irrespective of outbreaks of war." Robert Nisbet, *The Making of Modern Society* (Brighton, Sussex: Wheatsheaf, 1986), pp. 202–3.

from God to the state, so is the concept of primary ownership. The state is then regarded as the absolute owner. Individuals become stewards of the state. They own only what the state allows them to retain. A grant of tax exemption by the state is regarded as revocable at any time. *This is why a successful defense of freedom must begin with the doctrine of God's sovereignty and permanent restraints on those covenantal agencies that represent God in history*. The permanent economic limit on the church is the tithe: 10% of a person's net output (= net income).[20] The permanent economic restraint on civil government is also the tithe: all combined levels of the state may not lawfully claim so much as a tithe (I Sam. 8:15–17).[21]

Whenever men deny God's absolute sovereignty, they also deny His right to place economic and judicial limits on those institutions that represent Him judicially. This leads inevitably to an attempt by men to transfer final sovereignty in history: from God to some human agency, usually the state. The state then seeks to place boundaries around God's revealed word, the Bible. The alternative is to admit that God's revealed word has placed boundaries around the state. *Boundaries are an inescapable concept*. So, questions are: Who creates them? Who lawfully announces them? What are they? How are they enforced? How are they modified over time? The one who successfully commands sacrifice is the god of the society, the law-giver.

E. Debt Relief

This law made it plain to all that there is a price to be paid for sin. Man must pay this price. There is no escape. God imposes it and then collects it. The question is: How high is this price? If it is higher than any sin-corrupted man can pay in history, must all men pay the penalty throughout eternity? If not, who can and will pay it?

1. Buying God's Favor

This passage could easily be misinterpreted apart from a clear understanding of its theocentric foundation. It would be easy to conclude that fallen man can purchase the favor of God, or at least temporary legal standing before God, through the payment of a price. By forfeiting the ownership of a valuable asset, fallen man might con-

20. Gary North, *The Covenantal Tithe* (Powder Springs, Georgia: American Vision, 2011).

21. Gary North, *Disobedience and Defeat: An Economic Commentary on the Historical Books* (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, 2012), ch. 14.

clude that he can buy God's blessing or avoid God's wrath. Salvation would then be understood as a period of healing in between sacrifices: the outcome of a payment by fallen man to a powerful God. He might conclude: "My offer of a sacrifice *buys time* from God." This has been the view of religions throughout history, at least those that acknowledge the reality of time.[22]

The Bible teaches that fallen man is incapable of offering anything to God that is sufficiently valuable to placate His wrath for man's sin. Fallen man has nothing of value to offer God. Isaiah 64:6 informs us: "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags;[23] and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away." The moral corruption of man has tainted the whole creation; it, too, is under the curse of death.[24] All of our offerings are inescapably tainted. Therefore, it is impossible for the blood of animals, in and of itself, to placate the God of the Bible. "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins" (Heb. 10:4). Shed blood did defer God's wrath in history. How? *Because the animal's death was judicially representative: part of a hierarchical system of authority*. The shedding of the blood of certain specified animals was covenant-keeping man's public acknowledgment of his *subordination* to God and his *legal debt to God*.

Hierarchy and representation—point two of the biblical covenant—lead us to the issue of ownership: point three. The necessity of representative sacrifice involves the necessity of economic loss. Adam violated God's boundary; God therefore imposed a cost on Adam and his heirs. Adam stole what was God's; God therefore imposed restitution payments on Adam and his heirs. Adam denied God's ab-

22. Biblical religion also requires a redeeming sacrifice. Were it not for the sacrifice of Jesus Christ in history, to which God looked forward in time, Adam would have been executed on the day he sinned (Gen. 2:17). The difference between biblical religion and pagan religion with respect to sacrifice is that Christianity teaches that the sole acceptable sacrifice before God is the single, representative, *judicial act* of the life of an *ethically perfect man*, Jesus Christ. Covenant-keeping man is to redeem the time—buy it back—through a Holy Spirit-empowered, progressive ethical conformity to God's law. The biblical concept of salvation is therefore both judicial and ethical. Paul's injunction to redeem the time appears in the middle of an intensely ethical passage. "Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil" (Eph. 5:14–16).

23. Literally: menstruous rags. Hebrew root word meaning woman's period: *ayd*. See Strong's Hebrew #5708: James Strong, *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*.

24. North, *Sovereignty and Dominion*, ch. 12: "Scarcity: Curse and Blessing"; North, *Is the World Running Down? Crisis in the Christian Worldview* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1988), pp. 8–11.

solute sovereignty (#1) and revolted against God's authority (#2) by violating God's property (#3). God's sanctions (#4) are mandatory. Who pays? Under the Mosaic law, the owners of sacrificial animals paid with their valuable animals, and the animals paid with their lives. This chain of events raises some fundamental questions.

2. Substantial Losses

Why was there a Levitical requirement of blemish-free sacrifices? Why did God impose a system of sacrifice on fallen man, whether blood sacrifice or economic, if the specific sacrifice is insufficient to cover sin? Why require a high-value, blemish-free animal? Because man is made in the image of God, and his acts are supposed to reflect God's acts. This raises the question of God's acts.

God has offered a sacrifice to Himself: a high-value, ethically blemish-free sacrifice. To meet His own judicial standards, God forfeited in history the most valuable Lamb of His flock, His own Son. It is not what fallen man pays to God that repays God for sin (a trespass or boundary violation); it is *what God pays to Himself*. The blemish-free animal in the Mosaic sacrificial system symbolized (i.e., judicially represented) this perfectionist aspect of lawful atonement. Even closer symbolically than slain animals was God's announcement to Abraham that he would have to sacrifice Isaac, a payment for which God later mandated a substitute: the ram (Gen. 22:13). The faithful Israelite of the Old Covenant acknowledged ritually and economically that such a sacrifice by God would be substituted by God in the future; until then, he would have to bear earthly economic losses in order to regain lawful standing before God. Isaiah made it clear that the coming Messiah would be the one to pay God's full price (Isa. 53:2–12).

It was not that the faithful Israelite could legitimately expect to pay for his sin through the forfeiture of a blemish-free animal. It was only that *God required him to suffer a large loss*. God's negative sanctions against sin impose inescapable costs on man and beast (Gen. 3:17–19;[25] Rom. 8:19–22[26]). Man is required to acknowledge the existence of these costs, as well as the judicial necessity of his bearing such costs, either personally or through his representative legal agent.

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25. North, *Sovereignty and Dominion*, ch. 12.

26. Gary North, *Cooperation and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Romans*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2000] 2012), ch. 6.

3. The Hierarchy of Debt

These costs, however, are greater than mankind's total wealth. "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matthew 16:26).[27] This lack of sufficient funds was the message of Jesus' kingdom parable in Matthew 18: a servant who owed a gigantic amount to his master was conditionally forgiven of this debt by his master. Then the servant demanded the immediate repayment of a comparatively tiny amount from a poor debtor, and when the poor man could not pay, the steward had him thrown into debtors' prison. Then the master revoked his mercy and delivered the servant to debtors' prison. "Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses" (Matt. 18:32–35).[28]

If we are to take this parable as a representation of God's judicial relationship with fallen man, we must conclude that *God's forgiveness of a man's debts is conditional*.[29] The former debtor must forgive the debts owed to him by his neighbor. The neighbor, according to the parable of the good Samaritan, is that person who walks the same road we do who has been harmed along the way through no fault of his own (Luke 10:30–37).[30] When we help him, we should not insist on repayment. Similarly, when I lend to him for commercial purposes, I should not expect him to repay me if I have had my debts forgiven. My continuing legal status as a forgiven debtor is conditional on my granting the same status to those who owe me anything.

Why should this be true? Because the debt-credit relationship is inescapably hierarchical. The borrower is servant to the lender (Prov. 22:7).[31] When God grants me credit, and I in turn grant someone else

27. Gary North, *Priorities and Dominion*, ch. 35.

28. *Ibid*, ch. 37: "A Hierarchy of Indebtedness."

29. Ray R. Sutton, "Whose Conditions for Charity?" *Theonomy: An Informed Response*, ed. Gary North (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1991), ch. 9.

30. Gary North, *Treasure and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Luke*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2000] 2012), ch. 21: "The Good Samaritan and the Concept of Neighbor."

31. Gary North, *Wisdom and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Proverbs*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, 2012), ch. 67.

credit, that person has become God's servant through me. This is why biblical law recommends that God's people become creditors to covenant-breakers, but not become debtors to them (Deut. 28:12).[32]

What commentators rarely (if ever) mention is that the poor debtor owed the money to the rich master. The steward had merely served as an economic and legal middleman. The steward had advanced the poor person money that did not belong to the steward; it had been borrowed from the master. The steward had legal control over the money *temporarily*; he did not own it. This is the definition of all stewardship: temporary legal control over the use of another person's asset. This leads to an important conclusion: *the master's legal annulment of the debt owed to him by the steward was therefore also a legal annulment of the debts of all debtors under the steward's economic authority*. In other words, the debt structure was hierarchical: from the poor man to the master through the steward.[33]

Why was the steward unjust? His sin was more than ethical injustice to a poor person; it was judicial rebellion against the master. By trying to collect payment from the poor man, the steward was saying: "I am no longer a middleman, now that my debt has been forgiven. I am now the owner of assets. The credit that I extended with borrowed money is still owed to me irrespective of my previous obligations. I am therefore no longer a steward. I am no longer under hierarchy. I can now collect what is lawfully mine from those who are under me." His refusal to cancel the debt that *had been owed to the master through the steward's lending* was a rebellious declaration of independence. He became a thief and a usurper, for he was trying to collect for his own account assets that, economically speaking, had belonged to the master. He was trying to profit from the master's mercy. He refused to acknowledge the *economics of forgiveness*. The master had implicitly released the poor man from his debt, which had been owed to the master by way of the servant, the day the master released his steward from his obligation. The unjust steward refused to acknowledge the legality of this indirect (representative) release. He held to the letter of the law—the terms of the original debt contract—rather than to the underlying economics of the transaction: hierarchical representation and lawful subordination. So, the master reimposed the debt in order to remind the steward that he was still nothing but a steward, that he was still under the master's lawful authority.

32. Gary North, *Inheritance and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Deuteronomy*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [1999] 2012), ch. 37.

33. North, *Priorities and Dominion*, ch. 37.

However, by consigning the unjust steward to prison, *the master was implicitly reimposing the debt on the poor man*. The master in the parable did not order the release of the poor man. Why not? Because such a unilateral act of debt release would have been theft: stealing from the steward, i.e., taking away an asset that the steward could use to repay his debt. *The master could forgive the poor debtor only by forgiving the steward's debt by the same amount*. The steward's wife or heirs were legally empowered to collect everything owed to him in a vain attempt to pay off the master.

The day of reckoning—an accounting concept—had come for both the steward and the poor debtor. Time had run out for both of them. Their debt pyramid had toppled. The hierarchy of debt repayment would now be felt up and down the chain of obligations. Those foolish enough to have indebted themselves would now be reminded of the hierarchical nature of debt. The master had at last pressed his lawful claims. *By indebting himself to an unjust steward, the poor man brought the master's judgment on his own head*.[34] Covenant-keepers should learn this lesson well: do not become indebted to covenant-breakers. "The stranger that is within thee shall get up above thee very high; and thou shalt come down very low. He shall lend to thee, and thou shalt not lend to him: he shall be the head, and thou shalt be the tail" (Deut. 28:43–44).[35] When God periodically collects His debts from covenant-breakers in history, all those obligated to them or dependent on them feel the economic pain, including covenant-keepers.[36]

4. Representative Forgiveness

There was one reasonable hope for the unjust steward: his kinsman-redeemer. Legally, the steward was still the head of his household, but economically, his kinsman-redeemer was in authority. Only if someone possessing legitimate authority would show mercy in his name could he escape. There were only three ways for the kinsman-redeemer to help: (1) pay off the debt; (2) offer to replace the steward in prison; (3) pay off the poor man's debt and then plead for mercy from the master on the basis of this *representative act of mercy*. If the steward publicly consented to this third action on the part of his kinsman-redeemer, he might receive mercy from the master. But if the steward

34. North, *Priorities and Dominion*, ch. 37.

35. North, *Inheritance and Dominion*, ch. 37.

36. Anyone who doubts this should consider carefully what happens to debtors and everyone who sells goods and services to debtors during a deflationary economic depression.

remained adamant against the poor man, he himself would remain in debtors' prison. This much is sure: the poor debtor's fate was not in his own hands. He required mercy to escape: from the master or from his kinsman-redeemer.

When God granted the grace of additional time to fallen mankind, He thereby also granted *the grace of time* to the creation that was (and is) under man's lawful authority. The covenant's hierarchical authority structure remained (and remains) in place. Fallen man still owes the restitution payment to God. Nature is still under God's authority through man, and therefore is under God's curse on man. Fallen man is told to treat those under his authority with mercy analogous to the mercy shown by God to fallen man. What is the evidence of God's mercy? A system of representative blood sacrifice.

Why did God require animal sacrifices? What had the animals done to deserve this? Biblically, the answer is simple: *they fell with their commander, Adam*. Their representative fell, and they came under a curse. This is why certain animals could serve as sacrificial offerings acceptable to God. The animal had to be slain before it was placed on the altar. This symbolized the death of a cursed being, fallen man. After death comes fire with salt.[37] The sacrifice announced symbolically: "Either the dead animal roasts in history or else the dead sinner roasts in eternity." In order to preserve man's relationship with God, man must offer sacrifice. Old Covenant man had to offer animal sacrifices. These sacrifices also preserved the animal world's relationship with God. The sacrificed animals represented both the animal world and fallen man's world.

The animals came under God's judgment when Adam did. When God annulled the debts of all those who will ever come representatively under the debt protection of His Son Jesus Christ, He also annulled the sacrificial system that had previously governed His set-apart covenant people. Animals today need no representative sacrifices by other animals, since their debts, like the debts of God's cov-

37. "And every oblation of thy meat offering shalt thou season with salt; neither shalt thou suffer the salt of the covenant of thy God to be lacking from thy meat offering: with all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt" (Lev. 2:13). "All the heave offerings of the holy things, which the children of Israel offer unto the LORD, have I given thee, and thy sons and thy daughters with thee, by a statute for ever: it is a covenant of salt for ever before the LORD unto thee and to thy seed with thee" (Num. 18:19). "And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt" (Mark 9:47–49).

enant people, have been paid representatively by Jesus Christ. When covenant-keeping men's debts were forgiven, so were the debts of the animal world, debts that had been paid representatively from Abel's day by the sacrifice of certain animals. This debt cancellation took place definitively with the crucifixion of Christ and finally with the destruction of the temple in A.D. 70.

There can be no mercy without a sacrifice. God's mercy to mankind as a whole is demonstrated in his willingness to sacrifice His Son, a perfect man.[38] Men's mercy to the animal kingdom as a whole under the Mosaic system was demonstrated by the Israelites' willingness to sacrifice their own blemish-free animals. The fact that God was willing to sacrifice His Son testifies to His protection of mankind. Similarly, covenant-keeping men's willingness to sacrifice their most valuable animals testified to their hierarchical obligation to protect the creation. God's required sacrifices are testimonies to His mercy. When men refuse to offer God's mandatory sacrifices, they become progressively merciless.[39] In the New Covenant, the blood sacrifices are no more. There is only one sacrifice: the death of Jesus Christ (Heb. 9:12). But all men are required by God to acknowledge this sacrifice: verbally, ritually, ethically, and financially, i.e., the tithe.

Man's debt to God was not forgiven under the Old Covenant economy; its repayment was only deferred. In a sense, the sacrifices could at most meet the required "interest payments" to God; they did not repay the principal. Analogously, whenever Israel quit paying because of her rebellion, these missed payments were added to the principal owed. Israel's debt to God grew ever-larger.[40] Finally, in A.D. 70, God called in the debt.[41] Israel went bankrupt publicly. "Forgive us our debts" (Matt. 6:12) is no idle phrase.[42] The presence of the

38. Jesus did not die to save all men from hell, but His death provided the legal basis of the gift of life in history: common grace. Gary North, *Dominion and Common Grace: The Biblical Basis of Progress* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1987), ch. 1.

39. The animism and the pantheism of the modern ecology movement are denials of the God of the Bible and His required system of sacrifice. If this movement's stipulations are enforced by international civil law, we can expect tyranny on an international scale. Men will seek to overturn the Bible's hierarchical system: God > man > nature. Mankind will be sacrificed to nature. For a defense of just this sort of sacrifice, see Bill McKibben, *The End of Nature* (New York: Random House, 1989).

40. In real estate, this is called a *backward-walking mortgage*: the missed monthly mortgage payment is added to the principal owed, so the subsequent payments must be larger.

41. David Chilton, *The Great Tribulation* (Ft. Worth, Texas: Dominion Press, 1987).

42. North, *Priorities and Dominion*, ch. 12.

required sacrifices in the Mosaic economy testified to the continuing presence of the debt in God's account books, and also to each man's need to repay God in the future. The cosmic Creditor will eventually demand repayment of everything owed to Him. On that final day of reckoning, every person will have to produce one of two things: sufficient funds to repay his debt (impossible) or evidence that he had already accepted the generosity of the Kinsman-Redeemer who had repaid his debt. At the final judgment, the books are forever closed. So is the exit from the ultimate debtor's prison.

By forgiving a sin against us, we symbolically and legally forgive *a debt owed to God* through us. This is why one version of the Lord's prayer says "forgive us our sins" (Luke 11:4), while the parallel in Matthew says "forgive us our debts" (Matt. 6:12).[43] By extending forgiveness as God's representative agents, we are showing God's mercy to God's debtors in God's name. Offering up a scarce economic resource to God as a *sacrificial offering* is economically the same as *forgiving a debt* legally owed to us.

Consider the words of Jesus, the long-awaited representative who offered up Himself to God as a holy sacrifice: the ultimate Kinsman-Redeemer. He prayed to God from the cross: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots" (Luke 23:34). He legally annulled this horrendous sin for those who had truly acted out of ignorance—most obviously, the Roman guards who gambled for His clothing. His death and His words annulled *these specific debts* to God the Father. These men had sinned against God the Father by sinning against Jesus. When He forgave them, He did so as the victim. The principle of victim's rights allows such forgiveness.[44] He thereby also forgave them on His Father's account, as God's legal heir and representative agent.

The loss of the value of a sacrifice made to God symbolizes two things: (1) God's payment of His own Son, the Messiah, and (2) the patience that we have shown to those who had sinned against us. We are stewards, not owners. When we forgive others, we offer up a sacrifice to God: extending grace to sinners by forfeiting whatever they legally owed to us. Of course, we are gaining heavenly resources by doing this. "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where

43. Protestant churches that place heavy emphasis on liturgy (i.e., sacrifice-oriented) often pray "forgive us our trespasses." This is closest to the covenantal focus of Leviticus: boundaries and their violation.

44. North, *Authority and Dominion*, ch. 33.

moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal" (Matt. 6:19–20).[45]

5. New Covenant Burdens

Because Jesus' perfect sacrifice is behind us, we are no longer required by God to offer periodic animal or vegetable sacrifices. This removes from us an economic burden that the Old Covenant saint owed to God. Does this mean that we are not under comparable economic burdens? In some sense, *yes*. The costs of offering sacrifices have been eliminated. We no longer walk three times a year to Jerusalem. But, in another sense, analogous economic obligations do remain in the New Covenant era. We still owe to God-fearing men what Old Covenant saints owed to God-fearing men. In some cases, we owe more.

Consider the morally mandatory charitable loan.[46] In the Mosaic economy, a person who had been extended a zero-interest charity loan was under the threat of involuntary servitude that would last until the next national sabbatical year (Deut. 15:1–7).[47] Bankruptcy was expensive in those days. One did not just declare oneself bankrupt and escape the obligation of restitution through indentured servitude. Not so today. "But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil" (Luke 6:35).[48] Understand: the loan in this commandment is not a business loan; it is a charity loan. Jesus did not tell us that we have a moral obligation to make business loans to our rich enemies whenever they ask, and then suffer meekly when these debtors refuse to repay. That would deliver us economically into the hands of covenant-breaking masters. Jesus was talking about acts of mercy: charitable loans. We are to offer zero-interest loans, not for our gain, but in order to help the *deserving poor* escape from circumstances that afflict them.[49] We are not to loan money to drunks on the street to finance

45. North, *Priorities and Dominion*, ch. 13.

46. North, *Inheritance and Dominion*, ch. 36.

47. This did not apply to a non-compulsory, interest-bearing loan: North, *Authority and Dominion*, ch. 49.

48. North, *Treasure and Dominion*, ch. 10.

49. On the idea of the deserving poor, see Gertrude Himmelfarb, *The Idea of Poverty: England in the Early Industrial Age* (New York: Knopf, 1984; London: Faber & Faber, 1984).

their drunkenness. We are not to subsidize evil.[50] We are to show *intelligent mercy*.[51] When a truly impoverished debtor *cannot* repay, due to forces beyond his control, then we are to forgive the debt. In doing so, we make a sacrificial offer of forgiveness.

God will not collect what we owe to Him if we acknowledge publicly that Jesus has paid our gigantic debt.[52] Because of the shift in covenants, people no longer are required by God to spend money for, or forfeit income from, animals or grains offered as sacrifices. We nonetheless are required to suffer losses when God extends financial mercy through us to impoverished debtors: the legal right of a poor man to declare bankruptcy, thereby escaping his obligation to repay beyond the market value of his assets, which he forfeits. *This is why bankruptcy laws are a legitimate aspect of a Christian society*. That a person in the United States is allowed this God-granted privilege once every seven years is a dim reflection of the Mosaic Covenant's law of sabbatical release (Deut. 15:1–7). Since the late nineteenth century, there have been no debtors' prisons in the West. In the United States, if a debtor is willing to forfeit all his assets except the clothes on his back and the tools of his trade, he has identified himself as an impoverished person. He therefore is allowed to escape the demands of his creditors by declaring bankruptcy. If he is wise, however, he will later repay his creditors if he can. Because he owes so much to God, he should not seek to profit from the sacrifices borne by those who willingly extended credit to him.[53]

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50. R. J. Rushdoony, *Bread Upon the Waters* (Nutley, New Jersey: Craig, 1969), ch. 3: "Subsidizing Evil."

51. Sutton, "Whose Conditions for Charity?"

52. "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. 10:10).

53. I am not speaking here of civil governments. Anyone so unwise as to extend civil governments credit should not complain when these debtors declare bankruptcy, either directly or through mass inflation. Also, any Bible-affirming new administration in a civil government should feel no moral compunction against declaring the government's bankruptcy if previous administrations unwisely pledged the government's obligation to repay. Defaults on loans made to governments by foreign governments or foreign commercial banks are especially productive in this regard. Periodic bond defaults by civil governments are healthy for capital markets: they remind creditors not to loan money to institutions that are as wasteful and corrupt as modern civil governments. Investors should loan their money to productive enterprises, not governments, except in emergency situations such as wartime (maybe). The only other justification for lending to civil governments is in cases where private debtors are even less reliable.

F. Mandatory Sacrifices and Free Markets

Covenant-breaking man instinctively looks to the works of his own hands as the basis of his redemption. He believes that the work of his hands will placate God. He exhibits this faith in two ways. First, he seeks to offer a public sacrifice of reduced value. Cain's offer of agricultural produce rather than a slain animal is representative of man's search for an alternate sacrifice. He proclaimed ritually that he believed that his blood (life)[54] was not on the line. Second, man repeatedly places himself under the covenantal jurisdiction of false divinities that time and again claim total sacrifice. This is why *the quest for autonomy from the God of the Bible has led politically to the divinization of the state*, no matter how strong the technical case against the omnicompetent state may be. Autonomous man returns to the theology of the messianic state like a dog to its vomit. *That which can command unlimited sacrifice is seen as the savior of man and society*.

1. A Just-So God

Covenant-breaking man is schizophrenic. He seeks a divinity in history powerful enough to bless the works of his hands, yet not so powerful as to constitute a threat to his autonomy. This is why, whenever and wherever God's required public sacrifices[55] are either ignored or denied by society, we can expect to see increasingly successful attacks on the legitimacy of private property. Put differently, whenever and wherever the limits (boundaries) placed by God on man's required sacrifices are ignored, we can expect to see the state substitute itself as a new god which in principle requires unlimited sacrifice. Whatever property that the state allows men to retain under their personal control will be understood as due to the present grace of the state, or due to the state's present political inability to confiscate everything, or due to the state's present perception that individuals acting as taxpaying stewards can more efficiently expand the state's capital base. What God has delegated to the family in history, the Moloch State will eventually attempt to confiscate.[56]

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54. Blood and life are linked biblically: "For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul" (Lev. 17:11). "For it is the life of all flesh; the blood of it is for the life thereof: therefore I said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall eat the blood of no manner of flesh: for the life of all flesh is the blood thereof: whosoever eateth it shall be cut off" (Lev. 17:14).

55. The Lord's Supper is public. It is not mandated by the state; it is mandated by God.

56. North, *Authority and Dominion*, ch. 25.

This is the reason why an intellectual defense of economic freedom, if it is to be culturally successful over the long run, must be paralleled by the church's successful proclamation of the gospel of redemption—the buying back of individuals and institutions—through Christ's once-only sacrifice. The professed universalism of modern economic theory is no more valid than the professed universalism of Unitarianism. No matter how brilliant the technical intellectual defenses of specific aspects of the free market may be, and no matter how visible the failures of socialist economic planning may become,[57] the judicial foundation of the free market society and the epistemological foundation of economic science both must begin with the public proclamation of the covenantal reality of God's curse in Eden and the covenantal reality of God's redeeming sacrifice at Calvary. Economic theory is no more autonomous than society is. If a believable theological justification of economic theory and policy is not produced, the power-seeking state will revive and flourish once again. The theological appeal of statism will eventually overcome technical criticisms of economists. Men want to worship something more powerful than the textbooks' supply and demand curves. The visible sanctions of the state are more easily understood and more readily feared than the complex sanctions of the free market. The visible hand of the state, however spastic or grabbing it may be, is more readily believed in and feared that the invisible hand of the free market.

57. In 1989, these failures at last began to be acknowledged by intellectuals in the West because of the public admission by Communist officials of the economic breakdown in Communist nations. The intellectuals of the West once again took their cues from public statements by the tyrants who were running the Soviet Union. The West's economists had long been much better informed in this regard, yet even they continually overestimated the productivity of the Soviet economy. One of the few mainstream economists who recognized the magnitude of the USSR's weakness earlier than his peers was Harvard's Marshall I. Goldman, *USSR in Crisis: The Failure of the Soviet Economic System* (New York: Norton, 1983). As an outsider, I had concluded this by 1968. After surveying the critical analyses of Western economists through 1967, I concluded my appendix, "Soviet Economic Planning," with these words: "...it seems clear that without decentralization economically and the advent of a consumer society based on private ownership and profit, the basic issues will remain unsolved. The economy will shift back and forth between planning at the top and localism, growing more and more irrational as the complexity of the planning task grows ever greater. The system, in good Marxian terminology, contains the seeds of its own destruction." Gary North, *Marx's Religion of Revolution* (Nutley, New Jersey: Craig Press, 1968), pp. 225–26. Reprinted by the Institute for Christian Economics, 1989, p. 231.

2. The Moral High Ground

Politicians and judges are the ministers of the civil order (Rom. 13:4); they alone can lawfully impose physical sanctions outside a family. The scribes known as economists[58] can offer nothing that can permanently thwart the expansion of the state, for the economists' sanctions are intellectual, not physical. The economists' worldview is overtly technical, not moral. (In fact, their covert worldview is intensely theological: the religion of autonomous man in an autonomous universe.) Economists naively deny the legitimacy of morality in their formal pronouncements.[59] They have been doing so ever since the late seventeenth century.[60] The politicians affirm morality in their judgments. What is incorrectly perceived as the moral high ground eventually triumphs. The state enforces its power-based sovereignty over the free market.

If the illusion of occupying the moral high ground becomes widespread among the defenders of the statist order of self-proclaimed autonomous man, then only an economic cataclysm born of inherently irrational socialist economic planning can place anything like a permanent boundary on the state's expansion. The free market may triumph temporarily, as it did in England from 1845 to 1875, but eventually the moralists will once again invoke their god, the state, and the people will worship at its temples. The state possesses monopolistic power (negative physical sanctions). Infuse it with the messianic morality of the modern welfare state (positive sanctions), and it will either buy control of the free market (Keynesianism) or else suppress it (socialism).

Without explicitly biblical foundations, free market economic thought will remain merely a technical application of right-wing Enlightenment philosophy: knowledge without power. Free market

58. On economists as priests of the modern world, see Robert H. Nelson, *Reaching for Heaven on Earth: The Theological Meaning of Economics* (Savage, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 1991). This book is a brilliant exposition of a conceptually flawed thesis: "Roman" (Stoic, Catholic, rationalistic, corporate) economics vs. "Protestant" (individualist, non-rational) economics. The proper classification is realist economics vs. nominalist economics—in permanent dialectical tension—with covenantal economics as the biblical alternative.

59. This is the myth of value-free economics. For a critique, see North, *Authority and Dominion*, Appendix H: "The Epistemological Problem of Social Cost." A shortened version is North, *The Coase Theorem: A Study in Epistemology* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1992). See also North, *Sovereignty and Dominion*, ch. 5.

60. William Letwin, *The Origins of Scientific Economics* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1963).

social theory will remain the intellectual plaything of a minority of professional economists, most of whom are employed by the state in tax-funded universities. Without its epistemological grounding in sacrifice and sanctions, economic analysis will begin, at best, with an acknowledgment of the visible effects of God's curses in Genesis:

> And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return (Gen. 3:17–19).[61]

What must become central to economic analysis is the underlying theology of the five-point covenant that preceded God's imposition of negative sanctions against the creation.

1. The integrated doctrines of the special creation, the sovereignty of God as Creator, and therefore His absolute ownership of the creation (Gen. 1:1);
2. The doctrine of God's delegation of secondary ownership of the creation to man (Gen. 1:26–28);
3. The doctrine of the law of God, which appears in the form of an exclusive (and therefore exclusionary) property boundary (Gen. 2:17a);
4. The doctrine of God's negative sanctions against the person who violates His law and His property (Gen. 2:17b);
5. The doctrine of the promised negative historical sanctions against Satan through God's promised Seed (Gen. 3:15).

The acknowledgment of the reality of God-cursed economic scarcity is necessary but not sufficient for the reconstruction of economic analysis. We must also discover in God's word *and apply covenantally* the judicial foundations of economic reconstruction: the progressive removal in history of the effects of God's curse.[62]

Conclusion

By sacrificing to something sovereign over him (point 1), man acknowledges his debt to this higher authority (point 2). He seeks to draw a boundary of safety or immunity around himself, his works, and his property (point 3). He believes that his sacrifice will enable him

61. North, *Sovereignty and Dominion*, ch. 12.
62. North, *Is the World Running Down?*, chaps. 8, 9.

to avert the wrath and/or gain the blessings of this higher authority (point 4), enabling him to leave a valuable legacy to his heirs (point 5). Offering sacrifice is a ritual acknowledgment of someone else's sovereignty and one's own economic subordination: stewardship.

Covenant-keeping man in the Mosaic Covenant era was told by God to sacrifice animals from his flock. The animal had to be the best of his flock: *blemish-free*. This pointed symbolically (representatively), as had Abraham's sacrifice of the ram in place of Isaac, to the ultimate sacrifice: God's ethically blemish-free Son. At the same time, God did not require total sacrifice from His holy people. That which would constitute total sacrifice from fallen man is insufficient to pay the required bill to God. Thus, the person who presented the sacrifice to the priest was proclaiming ritually and publicly that he in principle owed everything to God (i.e., the best of his flock), but at the same time, all that he owned would not suffice to repay God (i.e., one animal only). The individual sacrifice was to be of high value but not total.

God placed specific limits—boundaries—on the required sacrifices.[63] These sacrificial boundaries put man in his proper place. They also allowed him to retain the majority portion of the wealth under his jurisdiction. In order lawfully to keep what he owned, he had to acknowledge ritually that it was all a gift from God. He acknowledged that his property was a *residual*: things left over for his use after God had taken His fair share. This same theology of residual ownership undergirds the tithe.

Mosaic sacrifices were representative. They represented the death of man and the death of nature. Both man and nature are under the curse of death because of Adam's rebellion. When God extended grace to man through Jesus Christ, He also extended grace to nature. No longer does God require animal sacrifices. Men may lawfully keep their blemish-free animals, and the blemish-free animals now keep their lives. Because God the Father has definitively extended grace to man and nature in history through the perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ, there is no further need for man to shed blood in order to placate God.

Economically, bankruptcy laws acknowledge the Bible's view of debt forgiveness. When a man declares bankruptcy, he hands over all his assets to his creditors, including all debts owed to him. Henceforth, he can no longer demand payment of debts owed to him. What-

63. North, *Authority and Dominion*, ch. 56.

ever had been owed to him is now owed to his creditors. This acknowledges the hierarchical nature of stewardship and forgiveness.

The Bible's definitive limitation on blood sacrifice has placed a definitive limit on mandatory economic sacrifice. Neither the state nor the church possesses an unlimited claim to our wealth. The tithe sets the maximum limits of both institutions in New Covenant times. This is a great blessing from God; under the Mosaic law, the combined burden was far greater—at least twice as great.[64] But when men refuse to sacrifice to God, they eventually wind up sacrificing far more to the state. God graciously limits His economic demands on us. The state, representing the collective god, autonomous man, is not equally gracious. This is why widespread moral rebellion always brings high taxes and inflation. The state demands to be placated. It claims the moral high ground by proclaiming the economics of confiscation. It robs the productive and gives to the unproductive. This is Satan's political economy: the disinheritance of the righteous. To thwart this satanic system of wealth redistribution, men must place God's boundaries around the state, but this means that they must pay their tithes to their local institutional churches.

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64. See the Introduction, Section H.

2

PRIESTLY REPRESENTATION

> *And when any will offer a meat [meal] offering unto the* Lord*, his offering shall be of fine flour; and he shall pour oil upon it, and put frankincense thereon: And he shall bring it to Aaron's sons the priests: and he shall take thereout his handful of the flour thereof, and of the oil thereof, with all the frankincense thereof; and the priest shall burn the memorial of it upon the altar, to be an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the* Lord*: And the remnant of the meat [meal] offering shall be Aaron's and his sons': it is a thing most holy of the offerings of the* Lord *made by fire.*
>
> LEVITICUS 2:1–3

The theocentric principle governing the interpretation of this passage is the need for representation before God: point two of the biblical covenant.[1]

A. The Priesthood

Fallen man does not have direct access to God. He must have an ecclesiastical mediator: a priest. This priest represents God before man and man before God. In the New Covenant, the ultimate and final high priest is revealed: Jesus Christ, the messiah.[2]

This sacrifice was the second of the five Levitical sacrifices, and was associated with point two of the biblical covenant: *hierarchical authority*. This sacrifice is called the *allegiance gift* by the rabbis.[3] As we

1. Ray R. Sutton, *That You May Prosper: Dominion By Covenant*, 2nd ed. (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, [1987] 1992), ch. 2. Gary North, *Unconditional Surrender: God's Program for Victory*, 5th ed. (Powder Springs, Georgia: American Vision, [1980] 2010), ch. 2.

2. The Epistle to the Hebrews is the central book for the development of the New Covenant priesthood.

3. See the comments of S. R. Hirsch, the mid-nineteenth-century founder of what

shall see, it was uniquely associated with the doctrine of the covenant, for it was the hierarchical (*hieros*: Greek for priest) sacrifice.

Of the five Levitical sacrifices, this one had the least to do with economics. Yet in other contexts, the actual Hebrew word had much to do with economics. The Hebrew word translated as *meat offering* by the King James translators, *minkhaw* (Lev. 2:4–11), is the word for *tribute offering*. This is what Jacob gave to Esau when he passed through Esau's territory (Gen. 32:13, 18); it was the "present" that Ehud promised to deliver to the tyrant Eglon (Jud. 3:15); it was what the Moabites brought to David (II Sam. 8:2) and the Syrians brought to David (II Sam. 8:6). This tribute payment was used by those under another's authority to purchase the favor of those ruling over them.

Significantly, it was this *minkhaw* or tribute offering which was brought to a priest by a husband in cases where the husband accused his wife of adultery: the offering of jealousy (Num. 5:15). When the wife had falsely sworn that she was innocent, her eating of this offering would cause her thigh to rot and her belly to swell (v. 22). More than any other Mosaic priestly ritual, this one produced a predictable, immediate, judicially binding result: a physiologically revealed falsehood—the closest thing to traditional magic in the Mosaic law. The priest could gain access to knowledge that was normally closed to judges. God responded immediately to this jealousy offering, intervening in history to identify a guilty wife, but only in cases of adultery: the supreme representative act of spiritual rebellion (Hosea 2). God's refusal to intervene visibly was legal evidence of the wife's innocence (Num. 5:28).

In Leviticus, the meal or tribute offering was closely associated with the priesthood, although common Israelites could bring this offering. This offering accompanied the inauguration of the Aaronic priesthood. The day Aaron was anointed, he and his sons had to offer a meal offering (Lev. 6:20). This had to be done with every anointing of a new priest, for it was a permanent statute (Lev. 6:22). At these Aaronic anointings, the meal offering could not be eaten; it had to be burned on the altar (Lev. 6:23). This fully consumed sacrifice represented the death of the priest for whom it was offered. As the administrator of the consuming fire of the altar, he had to be reminded that he, too, was under the threat of God's eternal fire.

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is today called Orthodox Judaism. He referred to this sacrifice as "a gift by which the giver recognises the receiver as the arbiter of his fate, and by the gift acknowledges and expresses his dependence on, and bondage and subjection to, the receiver of the gift." Samson Raphael Hirsch, *The Pentateuch*, 5 vols. (Gateshead, London: Judaica Press, [1867–70] 1989), III:1, p. 51.

The meal offering established the principle of priestly sacrifice at the time of each priest's anointing. When the authority of the priestly office was transferred to any male heir of Aaron, he and his sons had to offer this sacrifice. This sacrifice reminded them of their unique position of representation. They represented the nation before God. Those under them were at risk. The priests' moral conduct had to be exemplary because of their representative function. Also, their official conduct in offering the various sacrifices had to conform to the requirements of the covenant. Both moral purity and ritual precision were required of them, but the greater requirement was moral purity. One sign of this greater priestly responsibility was the law's requirement a priest's daughter who became a prostitute had to be burned alive (Lev. 21:9). This sanction did not apply to any other prostitute. The daughter of a priest represented her father's household; she was therefore under greater condemnation. Whoredom was representative (symbolic) of false worship: whoring after other gods.

When an Israelite brought a meal offering to the priest, the major part of this offering belonged to the priests: "And the remnant of the meat [meal] offering shall be Aaron's and his sons': it is a thing most holy of the offerings of the LORD made by fire" (Lev. 2:3). The priests burned a handful of the meal on the altar as their portion of the offering and then ate the remainder (Lev. 6:15–16). This had to be eaten in the court of the tabernacle of the congregation (v. 16). No females could participate in this common meal (v. 18). This is because priestly activities are uniquely representative of God, and God is exclusively male.

B. Leaven and Fire

This offering could not include leaven (Lev. 2:4–5). The reason for this is that part of it had to go on the altar. Leaven was not allowed on the altar (Lev. 2:11). Unleavened bread was required during Passover (Ex. 12:15). Unleavened bread symbolized Israel's radical break with Egypt, the symbol of pagan religion and tyranny. It was not that unleavened meal represented righteousness as such; rather, it represented Israel's discontinuous break in history from evil. Unleaven represented *historical discontinuity*—the transition from wrath to grace—prior to the oath-bound establishment of a covenantal nation.

The meal offering served as the priests' acknowledgment of their subordination to God and their break with the religion of Egypt. Thus, "It shall not be baken with leaven. I have given it unto them

for their portion of my offerings made by fire; it is most holy, as is the sin offering, and as the trespass offering" (Lev. 6:17). Leaven was not allowed on the altar, but not because it somehow represented evil as such. It represented a fully risen or completed product, as did honey, so it could not be burned on the altar. Leaven symbolized *historical continuity*. But men are still in history; their work is not yet completed. Thus, leaven was not symbolically proper on the fiery altar.

Part of this meal offering had to be burned on the altar:

> And thou shalt bring the meat [meal] offering that is made of these things unto the Lord: and when it is presented unto the priest, he shall bring it unto the altar. And the priest shall take from the meat offering a memorial thereof, and shall burn it upon the altar: it is an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord. And that which is left of the meat offering shall be Aaron's and his sons': it is a thing most holy of the offerings of the Lord made by fire (Lev. 2:8–10).

The fire on the altar was God's permanent, day-and-night testimony of His wrath. The animal and agricultural sacrifices placed on this fire produced a sweet savor for God (Lev. 1:9; 2:2; 3:5; 4:31). God delighted in the ritual burning of representative animals and meal. This symbolized (represented) God's delight in the eternal burning of His enemies, angelic and human (Rev. 20:14–15). This particular delight of God ought to be the terror of man. The smoke ascending day and night from God's altar was to serve as a reminder to man of what awaits covenant-breakers in eternity. This was God's testimony in history to the wrath that awaits covenant-breakers beyond history.

C. The Salt of the Covenant

The meal offering, more than the other sacrifices, was the sacrifice of the covenant. It was the one sacrifice in which salt was specifically mentioned: "And every oblation of thy meat [meal] offering shalt thou season with salt; neither shalt thou suffer the salt of the covenant of thy God to be lacking from thy meat offering: with all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt" (Lev. 2:13). This phrase, *the salt of the covenant*, ties this sacrifice to the Bible's system of covenantal subordination.

Why salt? First, it is an agency of incorruption, keeping things from spoiling.[4] Second, salt imparts flavor. Third, and most important with respect to sacrifices, it is an agent of permanent destruction.

4. Alfred Edersheim, *The Temple: Its Ministry and Services As They Were in the Time of Jesus Christ* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, [1874] 1983), p. 109.

It was used by armies to destroy permanently the fertility of their defeated enemies' land (Jud. 9:45). Salt is therefore associated with God's wrath in eternity: "And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt" (Mark 9:47–49).[5] It is also associated with God's covenantal wrath in history. God warned Israel at the time of the nation's act of covenant renewal, just before they entered the promised land, regarding Sodom's burning and Sodom's salt. Sodom had so thoroughly broken the terms of God's covenant that it was doomed to be salted over: final judgment.

> So that the generation to come of your children that shall rise up after you, and the stranger that shall come from a far land, shall say, when they see the plagues of that land, and the sicknesses which the LORD hath laid upon it; And that the whole land thereof is brimstone, **and salt**, and burning, that it is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass groweth therein, like the overthrow of Sodom, and Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim, which the LORD overthrew in his anger, and in his wrath: Even all nations shall say, Wherefore hath the LORD done thus unto this land? what meaneth the heat of this great anger? Then men shall say, Because they have **forsaken the covenant** of the LORD God of their fathers, which he made with them when he brought them forth out of the land of Egypt: For they went and served other gods, and worshipped them, gods whom they knew not, and whom he had not given unto them: And the anger of the LORD was kindled against this land, to bring upon it all the curses that are written in this book (Deut. 29:22–27).

The conclusion: "Keep therefore the words of this covenant, and do them, that ye may prosper in all that ye do" (Deut. 29:9).

The threat of God's covenant sanctions was not limited to the nation; it also included the individual. God warned what would happen to the covenant-breaking individual. Notice the language of smoke, which accompanies burning. "And it come to pass, when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst: The LORD will not spare him, but then the anger of the LORD and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and

5. For a discussion of this passage in the light of the New Testament's doctrine of eternal punishment, and the background of the Old Testament's sacrifices, see Gary North, "Publisher's Epilogue," in David Chilton, *The Great Tribulation* (Ft. Worth, Texas: Dominion Press, 1987), pp. 171–95.

all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the LORD shall blot out his name from under heaven. And the LORD shall separate him unto evil out of all the tribes of Israel, according to all the curses of the covenant that are written in this book of the law" (Deut. 29:19–21).

D. Firstfruits (Pentecost)

The meal offering is associated in the text with the firstfruits offering, another meal offering (Lev. 2:12, 14). Firstfruits was a mandatory annual offering (Ex. 23:16, 19). This offering was a man's public acknowledgment that God must be paid "off the top." That is, the farmer owed God the best of his field and the first portion of his crop. He was not to pay God last; he was required to pay God first. Firstfruits was one rare case in the Bible where God taxed capital rather than the net increase. The farmer did not deduct the replacement seed before offering the firstfruits; whatever came up was God's. But it was a small offering—a token offering.

The firstfruits payment was mandatory. This was his public acknowledgment of his subordination to God through the Aaronic priesthood. When the blessings of God's bounty appeared in his field, the owner was required to acknowledge the source of this bounty by bringing a meal offering to God.

According to rabbinic tradition, the tithe was paid on what remained after the firstfruits offerings and after gleaning had taken place.[6] This interpretation of the tithe is consistent with the idea that the tithe is paid only on that which is at the lawful disposal of the owner. We do not owe the church a tithe on that which has been lawfully appropriated by others. Counting all the required tithes (including the tithe of celebration: Deuteronomy 14:23),[7] the sacrifices, and the gleaning laws, the rabbis estimated that about one-quarter of the agricultural productivity of the land would have been transferred to others, not including civil taxes.[8] Many of these offerings beyond the tithe did not burden non-agricultural occupations.[9] This is additional evidence that biblical law indirectly subsidized urban employment by penalizing farming. Contrary to Edersheim, who wrote that "the

6. Edersheim, *Temple*, p. 379.

7. Gary North, *Inheritance and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Deuteronomy*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [1999] 2012), ch. 35.

8. Edersheim, *Temple*, p. 379. The rabbis assumed that the third-year and sixth-year festival tithes of Deuteronomy 14:26–29 were additional tithes.

9. *Idem.*

Law seems to regard Israel as intended to be only an agricultural people,"[10] the Mosaic law did a great deal to move Israelite families off the farm and into the city, as I explained in this book's Introduction.

Exodus 23:17 indicates that the public offering of the firstfruits, like the feast of ingathering (Tabernacles), was mandatory for all the men of Israel: "Three times in the year all thy males shall appear before the Lord God." Because the firstfruits offerings were explicitly agricultural, the products of other occupations were exempt. Still, in a predominantly agricultural society, the crowds entering Jerusalem would have been immense. Edersheim said that the later rabbinical estimate of the size of the original temple indicated that 210,000 people could worship there.[11] We ask ourselves: How did the priests handle the immense flow of individual sacrifices? Where did the people stay? How long did these round-trip journeys take? What expenses along the road did the travelers incur? This traveling expense would have been considerable, in contrast to the value of the firstfruits' representative grain offering.

These festivals were acts of covenant renewal. They were expensive and time-consuming. They would have required a great deal of patience, such as standing in long lines for many hours. God required the men of the nation to go through these ceremonies, despite the costs involved. Why? Because they were a nation of priests (Ex. 19:6).

Of all the festivals, firstfruits was the one least likely to have been attended by women. It was held 50 days after Passover (Lev. 23:15). Passover was a family celebration (Ex. 12). Women who had just walked home from the central location would have been tired of travelling with children. The men were required to attend; the women were not. Firstfruits would have tended to be a more male-oriented festival, analogous to the meal offering, which was exclusively masculine (Lev. 2:18).

Conclusion

This sacrifice was an aspect of point two of the biblical covenant. Bear in mind that Exodus is the second book in the Pentateuch. First, the phrase "salt of the covenant" (Lev. 2:13) parallels the Book of Exodus' identification as the book of the covenant (Ex. 24:7). Second, the prohibition of leaven points back to the exodus: the definitive break in Israelite history from bondage to false gods. All of Egypt's leaven had to be left behind. None could be brought into the Prom-

10. *Idem*.
11. *Ibid*., p. 138.

ised Land. This sharp break with the evil of Egypt was celebrated at the Passover meal, which also excluded leaven (Ex. 12:15). Third, the meal sacrifice was the second of the five sacrifices of Leviticus. Fourth, this sacrifice had to do with the priesthood: hierarchy.

The meal offering pointed to Israel as a nation under a covenant. It was under hierarchical authority, both civil and ecclesiastical. The meal offering more than the other four pointed to this hierarchical system of representation. The priests were required to make a meal offering at the time of their anointing. The common Israelite, when he had committed an unnamed infraction, brought a meal offering to the priest for sacrifice.

What was the nature of this transgression? We are not told, but we can deduce the answer. The transgression had no victim, or else the fifth sacrifice would have been appropriate: the trespass or reparation offering. It was not an unintentional sin, since the fourth sacrifice was not involved: the sin offering or purification offering. It was not a peace offering, which was voluntary and was not part of the atoning sacrifices. The whole burnt offering was associated with man's total submission to God. Thus, I conclude that the meal offering had something to do with a known infraction of a priestly law—what we call today ceremonial law.

The Israelite was a member of a nation of priests. As a household priest, he was under rigorous requirements regarding washing, bodily discharges, bodily contact, and so forth. To maintain his purity, he had to follow certain rules. A violation of these priestly rules brought him under the threat of sanctions. The meal offerings pointed to his position as a subordinate officer in a national priesthood.

For a man outside the temple's priesthood, the cost of bringing this sacrifice to Jerusalem was far greater than the value of the food sacrificed. This was true of all of the national festivals. These transportation and participation costs testified to God's sovereignty over Israel. They also imposed special economic burdens on agricultural production. This is evidence that God intended the Israelites to be urban people, with most farms in the land being managed in the name of original owners by specialists. The management of agriculture would have been representative, much as modern agriculture is.

The meal offering was priestly. It was associated with Israel's status as priest of the nations. The common Israelite was held responsible by God for honoring the priestly laws of separation from the nations. This sacrifice atoned for violations of the laws of separation.

3

LEAVEN AND PROGRESSIVE SANCTIFICATION

And if his oblation be a sacrifice of peace offering, if he offer it of the herd; whether it be a male or female, he shall offer it without blemish before the Lord. . . . It shall be a perpetual statute for your generations throughout all your dwellings, that ye eat neither fat nor blood.

LEVITICUS 3:1, 17

And this is the law of the sacrifice of peace offerings, which he shall offer unto the Lord. If he offer it for a thanksgiving, then he shall offer with the sacrifice of thanksgiving unleavened cakes mingled with oil, and unleavened wafers anointed with oil, and cakes mingled with oil, of fine flour, fried. Besides the cakes, he shall offer for his offering leavened bread with the sacrifice of thanksgiving of his peace offerings. And of it he shall offer one out of the whole oblation for an heave offering unto the Lord, and it shall be the priest's that sprinkleth the blood of the peace offerings. And the flesh of the sacrifice of his peace offerings for thanksgiving shall be eaten the same day that it is offered; he shall not leave any of it until the morning.

LEVITICUS 7:11–15

The theocentric focus of these judicially unified passages is the possibility of bringing to an end a state of war between God and fallen man.

A. The Terms of Surrender

Man must seek peace on God's terms, not on his own terms. God does not seek peace on man's terms. Here are the terms of peace: unconditional surrender.[1] The question is: Must man surrender unconditionally to God, or must God surrender unconditionally to man?

1. Gary North, *Unconditional Surrender: God's Program for Victory*, 5th ed. (Powder Springs, Georgia: American Vision, [1980] 2010).

The irreconcilable conflicting answers to this question constitute the essence of the war between Christianity and humanism.

The Mosaic sacrificial system testified to the possibility of peace. The peace offering was the third of the five Levitical sacrifices. It corresponded to point three of the biblical covenant, because it dealt with boundaries: the boundary separating God from man.[2] In Mosaic Israel, this boundary principle applied above all to the temple-tabernacle.

The goal of this sacrifice was peace with God: a goal for all seasons. When an Israelite sought to establish special peace with God, he brought a sacrificial animal to the priest. This offering had to be blemish-free, as was the case in the other offerings. The blemish-free animal was the mark of the best a man could offer God. As we shall see, this is also why leaven had to accompany the peace offering. But the offering had to include unleavened bread as well. This mixture of leaven and unleaven creates a problem for the commentator. What did each of these offerings symbolize? They seem contradictory, yet both were required in the same offering.

B. The Peace Offering

The peace offering was not tied to a vow or an oath. We know this because the Israelite was not allowed to eat this sacrifice over a period of two days (Lev. 7:15), unlike a votive (vow) offering, which could lawfully be eaten the second day (Lev. 7:16). An unclean person who ate the peace offering had to be excommunicated: cut off from the people (Lev. 7:20), i.e., the creation of a new boundary. This sacrifice, more than the other four, involved boundaries (point three): lawful and unlawful crossing into God's presence.

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This sacrifice is designated by the Hebrew word transliterated *zehbakh*. Milgrom said that this word always means "slain offering whose meat is eaten by the worshipper." He cites as particularly revealing Jeremiah 7:21: "Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Put your burnt offerings unto your sacrifices [*zehbakh*], and eat flesh."[3]

2. Ray R. Sutton, *That You May Prosper: Dominion By Covenant*, 2nd ed. (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, [1987] 1992), ch. 3. North, *Unconditional Surrender*, ch. 3.

3. Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, vol. 3 of *The Anchor Bible* (New York: Doubleday, 1991), p. 218.

I conclude that the common person could eat part of this offering because of the laws governing uncleanness. The law stated that an unclean person could not lawfully eat this sacrifice (Lev. 7:20–21). But this law of uncleanness always applied to priests. If this law applied only to priests, there was no need to mention this requirement. By singling out the possibility that a clean person could enter the sacrifice (priestly) area, this law identified this sacrifice as a shared meal in which the common offerer could participate. This sacrifice was unique among the five in that it allowed a common Israelite or circumcised resident alien to eat a ritual meal in the presence of God.

The view that this sacrifice was a shared meal is conventional.[4] This sacrifice was, in the words of Rabbi Hirsch, "a meal to be eaten in company with others;..."[5] He referred to the sacrificer's desire of "getting nearer to God on account of the necessity to raise the standard of the holiness of one's activities.... [T]o enjoy this life on earth in the Presence of God is the highest service of God."[6] The basis of this access to God, this "eternal bridge up to God," as Hirsch put it, is joy, not trouble.[7] This is a profound insight.

The priest collected part of this offering for his own use (Lev. 7:14). This indicates, though does not prove, that the priest ate the meal with the sacrificer and his family and friends.

Where was it eaten? Milgrom argued that it was eaten inside the sanctuary's boundaries. He referred to the sacrifice of the sanctuary in Shiloh: "And the priest's custom with the people was, that, when any man offered sacrifice [*zehbakh*], the priest's servant came, while the flesh was in seething, with a fleshhook of three teeth in his hand; And he struck it into the pan, or kettle, or caldron, or pot; all that the fleshhook brought up the priest took for himself. So they did in Shiloh unto all the Israelites that came thither" (II Sam. 2:13–14).[8] This sacrifice was a *zehbakh*: a shared meal. The offerer's sacrifice was boiled on the sanctuary premises. There were probably special halls for eating the sacrificial meal, he concluded (I Sam. 9:22; Jer. 35:2). This is why there were rules governing the offerer's uncleanness, he said.

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4. John E. Hartley, *Leviticus*, vol. 4 of *Word Bible Commentary* (Dallas, Texas: Word Books, 1992), p. 42.

5. Samson Raphael Hirsch, *The Pentateuch*, 5 vols. (Gateshead, London: Judaica Press, [1867–78] 1989), III, pp. 73–74.

6. *Ibid.*, III, p. 75.

7. *Idem.*

8. Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, p. 223.

C. Neither Blood Nor Fat

One boundary involved the sacrificed animals. The Israelites were not allowed to eat fat or blood during this sacrifice. Unlike the prohibition against fat, the prohibition against drinking blood was universal: "Moreover ye shall eat no manner of blood, whether it be of fowl or of beast, in any of your dwellings. Whatsoever soul it be that eateth any manner of blood, even that soul shall be cut off from his people" (Lev. 7:27). Life is associated with blood (Gen. 9:4). "Only be sure that thou eat not the blood: for the blood is the life; and thou mayest not eat the life with the flesh" (Deut. 12:23). In many pagan religions, drinking blood ritually is an affirmation of the continuity associated with a blood covenant.[9] The drinker signifies his faith that the life, spirit, and power of the slain person or beast is transferred to him through the blood. Quite frequently, blood-drinking is associated with demonic possession.[10] This Old Covenant prohibition exists in the New Covenant (Acts 15:29). Another ritual of covenantal blood-drinking is required, however: the drinking of symbolic blood (wine) in the communion meal.[11]

The prohibition against eating fat was not universal; it applied only during ritual sacrifices. In this shared ritual meal, fat was reserved to God because it was the most desirable portion. In their private feasting, Israelites were allowed to eat fat. Fat, including bulk carried on men's bodies, in the Bible is viewed as a sign of God's blessing. Rushdoony wrote: "Fat in Scripture both literally and symbolically usually represented wealth. . . . In Scripture, fat is the sign of healthiness and vigor, of prosperity."[12] Of course, in pre-modern societies, hard physical labor was the rule. People burned off excessive fat. Their diets were heavy on grains and vegetables rather than meat, a luxury, or refined sugar, which was non-existent. In modern times, excessive weight is regarded (often incorrectly) as a sign of a person's insufficient self-discipline, not his prosperity. In fact, obesity today is a combination of genetic inheritance, nearly unbreakable eating

9. Article on "Blood," *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, ed. James Hastings (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1909), II, p. 716. The author cited Trumbull, *The Blood Covenant*, pp. 126–34.

10. *Idem*.

11. "Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:53–54).

12. R. J. Rushdoony, "Fat," *Encyclopedia of Christianity*, ed. Philip E. Hughes (Marshallton, Delaware: National Foundation for Christian Education, 1972), IV, p. 179.

habits begun in childhood, and historically unprecedented food supplies, especially wheat and grain products. Such "inputs" were not easily affordable for most people prior to the late nineteenth century. Isaiah prophesied regarding the coming millennial era: "And in this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined" (Isa. 25:6). Moses sang of God's covenantal blessings to Israel:

> So the Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him. He made him ride on the high places of the earth, that he might eat the increase of the fields; and he made him to suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock; Butter of kine, and milk of sheep, with fat of lambs, and rams of the breed of Bashan, and goats, with the fat of kidneys of wheat; and thou didst drink the pure blood of the grape (Deut. 32:12–14).

When the Israelites returned to the land in Nehemiah's day, the priests read the law to them. Then they told the people that this was a time for rejoicing, a time to eat fat.

> So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading. And Nehemiah, which is the Tirshatha, and Ezra the priest the scribe, and the Levites that taught the people, said unto all the people, This day is holy unto the Lord your God; mourn not, nor weep. For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the law. Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our Lord: neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the Lord is your strength. So the Levites stilled all the people, saying, Hold your peace, for the day is holy; neither be ye grieved (Neh. 8:8–11).

The prohibition against the ritual eating of fat was a way of separating the sacrificer's portion from God's portion during all the sacrifices. God placed a "no trespassing" sign around the fat during the peace offering, when He came close to the sacrificer during this shared meal. Man was reminded once again that God's holiness is always marked off by a boundary. In Old Covenant Israel, the tabernacle- temple was the primary boundary. Crossing this boundary under the Mosaic Covenant was lawful for an Israelite during the peace offering, but another boundary immediately appeared, one that did not exist outside the boundary of the temple: the prohibition against eating fat. God refused to share fat with His holy people within His special dwelling place, but He gave fat to them as a blessing outside that boundary.

D. Offerings from the Field

The Israelite brought more than an animal to the priest for the peace offering; he brought the fruit of the field, too. He brought baked cakes, both leavened and unleavened. The peace offering testified publicly that God had blessed him in his fields and his barns; he was bringing to God representative samples of the best of his produce. This is why leaven had to be part of the sacrifice of the peace offering. *Leaven is the symbol of expansion in history: God's blessings compounded over time*. Leaven was the best that an Israelite was able to offer God from his field.

We discover here a very important theological principle: *the close association between law and dominion*. Leaven is a physical agent of expansion. The issue of boundaries, of holiness, in Leviticus is associated with the leaven of the peace offering, the third sacrifice. The message conveyed by this symbol is that *God's leaven progressively replaces Satan's leaven in history*. This cultural replacement process—the dominion covenant's process—is associated more closely with holiness (moral set-apartness) than it is with transcendence, hierarchy, sanctions, or inheritance. Point three of the biblical covenant model is law.[13] Leaven, dominion, and biblical law were linked.

Because of the importance of this covenantal principle of growth, and because a common theological error in twentieth-century evangelicalism was the association of leaven with evil, I focus on the principle of leaven in this chapter. I need to explain why leaven is not a principle of evil; rather, it is the principle of *compound growth in history*. It is associated with progressive sanctification, both personal and corporate.

What of unleaven? It always symbolizes a discontinuity. In the context of the Passover meal, unleavened bread was mandatory. Unleavened bread marked the historical discontinuity between Egypt and the Promised Land. None of Egypt's leaven was to be carried out of Egypt. This discontinuity was specifically religious and cultural: the break with Egypt's religion and civilization. The Passover meal was to symbolize a covenantal break with Egyptian thought and culture, not a break from the establishment of culture as an outworking of God's covenant. This is why the peace offering required leaven. It reminded the Israelites of their kingdom requirements.

13. Sutton, *That You May Prosper*, ch. 3. North, *Unconditional Surrender*, ch. 3.

E. The Two Rival Leavens[14]

We can better understand the biblical meaning of leaven when we recognize that leavened bread was also offered as the firstfruits of the Lord, meaning the *best* of a family's productivity: "Ye shall bring out of your habitations two wave loaves of two tenth deals: they shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven; they are the first-fruits unto the LORD" (Lev. 23:17). *Leaven is the best that man has to offer, the bread he eats with pleasure*. It is man's offering to God. (The festival of firstfruits in the New Testament is associated with Pentecost: Acts 2.)

This has not been a common interpretation. A far more familiar interpretation teaches that leaven represents man's corruption. The rabbinical tradition has long associated leaven with man's evil propensities.[15] Also, the high priest in Rome in Plutarch's day was forbidden to touch leaven.[16] Milgrom referred to "an older and universal regard of leaven as the arch-symbol of fermentation, deterioration, and death and, hence, taboo on the altar of blessing and life."[17]

This traditional interpretation is incorrect, as I hope to show. The reason why leaven was prohibited is that it would have been a mature burnt offering, like honey, which was also prohibited (Lev. 2:11). *Leaven symbolizes progressive sanctification through history*. It does not symbolize definitive sanctification at a point in time, i.e., historical discontinuity. Leaven also does not symbolize final sanctification at the end of time, i.e., history's completion. As a symbol of growth through time with continuity, leaven was kept from the fiery altar because God will not bring His all-consuming fire until the end of time. Leaven was not burned on the altar because it was a symbol of *growth moving toward completion*. Leaven has no ethical connotation; it does not represent any taboo.

1. Passover

The Passover feast prohibited leaven. During the Passover, people ate bitter herbs with their unleavened bread (Ex. 12:8). This bread and the bitter herbs symbolized the hard times of captivity in Egypt, the world out of which God had delivered them. Baking unleavened bread on that first Passover night avoided the need for the additional

14. This section is a modification of my book, *Unconditional Surrender*, pp. 282–84, 289–92

15. Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, p. 189.

16. *Idem*.

17. *Idem*.

time required for yeast to rise. Unleavened bread was therefore a symbol of a major historical discontinuity: God's overnight deliverance of His people from Egypt. *Unleavened bread symbolized God's overnight deliverance*, since it was not the best of what man can offer God under the best of circumstances. Leaven was. God broke into the daily affairs of His people and delivered them from Egypt's bitter herbs. God delivered them out of bondage overnight. He led them to a land flowing with milk and honey, a land in which men have the wealth and time to bake and eat leavened bread. Once in the promised land, they were to offer this bread to God in thankfulness. Unleavened bread was a symbol of discontinuity: from wrath to grace. Leaven was a symbol of continual growth through time: dominion.

Why were the Israelites required to get rid of all leavened bread in Israel for a week before the feast (Ex. 12:15)? Because the original Passover had been celebrated in Egypt. Again, it was *Egypt's* leaven that had to be purged out of their midst before they left the land. Leaven in the context of Passover was a symbol of Egypt's culture and therefore of Egypt's religion. Leavened bread was representative of the good life in Egypt: all the benefits in Egypt that might tempt them to return. So, God required them to celebrate *a discontinuous event*: their overnight deliverance from bondage. They were to take no leaven with them—none of Egypt's gods, or religious practices, or diabolical culture—to serve as "starter" in the Promised Land.

Once they entered the land of Canaan as conquerors, they were *required* to eat leavened bread and offer it as a peace offering to God. This was the reason for the leavened bread of the peace offering (Lev. 7:13) and the Firstfruits offering (Lev. 23:7). This is also why Christians are supposed to eat leavened bread when they celebrate Holy Communion. It is a symbol of conquest. *We are now on the offensive, carrying the leaven of holiness back into Egypt, back into Babylon*. We are the leaven of the world, not corrupting the unleavened dough, but "incorrupting" it—bringing the message of salvation to Satan's troops, tearing down the idols in men's hearts. God's holy leaven is to replace Satan's unholy leaven in the dough of history.

Leaven is therefore not a symbol of sin and corruption, but a symbol of growth and dominion. It is not a question of an "unleavened" kingdom vs. a "leavened" kingdom; it is a question of *which* (whose) leaven. It is not a question of "dominion vs. no dominion"; it is a question of *whose* dominion. The dough (history) is here. Whose leaven will complete it, God's or Satan's?

2. The Kingdom as Righteous Leaven[18]

The kingdom of God is like leaven. Christianity is the yeast, and it has a leavening effect on the pagan, satanic culture around it. It is designed to permeate the whole of this culture, causing it to rise. *The bread produced by this leaven is the preferred bread*. In ancient times—indeed, right up until the nineteenth century—bread was considered the staff of life, the symbol of life. It was the source of men's nutrition. "Give us this day our daily bread," we are to ask God (Matt. 6:11). The kingdom of God is the force that produces the fine quality bread that men seek. The symbolism should be obvious: Christianity makes life a joy for man. It offers the cultural benefits that most men acknowledge as the best (Deut. 4:5–8).[19]

Leaven takes time to produce its positive effect. *Leaven requires historical continuity*. Men can wait for their leavened bread, for God gives them time sufficient for the working of His spiritual leaven. They may not understand how it works, how its spiritual effects spread through their culture and make it a delight, any more than they understand how yeast works to produce leavened bread, but they can see the bread rising, and they can see the progressive effects of the leaven of the kingdom. They can look into the oven and see risen bread.

If we really push the analogy—pound it, even—we can point to the fact that the dough is pounded down several times before the final baking, almost as the world pounds the kingdom; but the yeast does its work, *just so long as the fires of the oven are not lit prematurely*. If the full heat of the oven is applied to the dough before the yeast has done its work, both the yeast and the dough are burnt, and the burnt mass must be thrown out. But given sufficient time, the yeast does its work, and the result is the bread that men prefer.

What a marvelous description of God's kingdom! Christians work with the cultural material available, seeking to refine it, to permeate it, to make it into something fine. They know that they will be successful, just as yeast is successful in the dough, if it is given enough time to do its work. That is what God implicitly promises us in the analogy of the leaven: *enough time to accomplish our individual and our*

18. For a more detailed exegesis, see Gary North, *Authority and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Exodus* (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, 2012),, Part 1, *Representation and Dominion* (1985), ch. 12:F–H.

19. Gary North, *Inheritance and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Deuteronomy*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [1999] 2012), ch. 8.

corporate tasks. He tells us that His kingdom *will* produce the desirable bread. This will take time. It may take several poundings, as God, through the hostility of the world, kneads the yeast-filled dough of man's cultures, but the end result is guaranteed.

F. Free-Will Offering and Covenant Renewal

The peace offering in Leviticus 7 was what in modern English phraseology would be called a free-will offering.[20] This language is found in Psalm 119:108: "Accept, I beseech thee, the freewill offerings of my mouth, O Lord, and teach me thy judgments." The peace offering was brought by the individual of his own free will; that is, he was not required by law to do this because of a particular sin. It was not a legal payment for sin. *It was a token of his appreciation for the grace that God had shown to him*. It was this Mosaic Covenant sacrifice that Paul had in mind when he wrote this injunction to Christians: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Rom. 12:1–2). Paul was not calling men to offer their lives as payments for their sins.[21] This had been done by Jesus Christ at Calvary once and forever (Heb. 9). He was instead calling men to a life of peace with God through sacrificial service.

The peace offering was a public act. It renewed the special friendship between God and a particular individual. It was an acknowledgment on the part of the sacrificer that he was completely dependent on God for everything he had been given. It was *a ritual confession* that God is the sustainer of the covenant. As the covenant sovereign, God deserves tokens of subordination beyond the tithe and ransom payments for sin, yet He does not demand them. He places men under the terms of the covenant, and these requirements are light (Matt. 11:30).[22] He lawfully could demand much more. He could demand more than everything a man possesses. "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Mark 8:36).

20. Andrew A. Bonar, *A Commentary on Leviticus* (London: Banner of Truth Trust, [1846] 1966), p. 131.

21. Gary North, *Cooperation and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Romans*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2000] 2012), ch. 8.

22. Gary North, *Priorities and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Matthew*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2000] 2012), ch. 25.

In His grace, however, He restricts His demands. God possesses the authority to compel men; therefore, we are warned, we should go the extra mile voluntarily. "And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain" (Matt. 5:41).[23] The person who "goes the extra mile" with God is publicly announcing his acceptance of God as the sovereign Lord of the covenant and himself as a *covenant vassal*.

One form of the peace offering involved a formal vow of some kind (Lev. 7:16). The other form did not (v. 15). Both involved a meal shared in the presence of God. Both required that the sacrificer be ritually clean (v. 20). Both involved boundaries: inclusive (a meal eaten in God's presence) and exclusive (no ritually unclean people). Both therefore were aspects of point three of the biblical covenant model—holiness—more than point four: oath/sanctions.

G. New Testament Applications

I shift now from Old Covenant applications to New Covenant applications. The primary Old Covenant applications were these: the lawful crossing of a boundary (the temple sacrificial area), the shared meal (God, family, and [probably] priest), the prohibition of fat (a prohibition unique to this feast: God's assertion of primary ownership), the principle of unleaven (discontinuity from sin), the principle of the leaven (progressive sanctification), and the mark of the faithful vassal (performing service beyond what is required). I devote the remainder of this chapter to New Testament applications.

Conservative Protestants who have bothered to comment on economic and political theory have for over two centuries been adherents of right-wing Enlightenment thought, mainly Scottish rationalism. This was especially true of the Princeton Seminary's theologians, from Archibald Alexander to Charles Hodge to J. Gresham Machen. They were Scottish common sense rationalists in their apologetic methodology.[24] They began their social theory with the presupposition of methodological individualism.[25] They made no exegetical effort to show how their methodological individualism conformed to the Mosaic law's account of man's corporate responsibility. They

23. *Ibid.*, ch. 9.

24. Mark A. Noll, "Introduction," Noll (ed.), *The Princeton Theology, 1812–1921* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker, 1983), pp. 30–33.

25. See, for example, William Brenton Greene, Jr., "The Bible as the Text-Book in Sociology," *Princeton Theological Review*, XII (Jan. 1914). (Greene was Professor of Apologetics from 1893 until 1928, when Cornelius Van Til replaced him for one year before leaving to join the faculty of Westminster Seminary.)

rarely appealed to any Mosaic law when presenting their economic ideas.

In contrast, promoters of the liberal Social Gospel after 1890 did acknowledge corporate responsibility, but decade by decade, they interpreted this increasingly as state responsibility. They made no effort to show how their presupposition of collective responsibility conforms to the biblical account of exclusively individual responsibility on judgment day. They made no reference to the Mosaic law's defense of private property and Samuel's definition of a tyrant as a king who would collect 10% of men's income (I Sam. 8:15, 17).[26] The two groups could not communicate with each other or persuade each other, for there was no hermeneutical point of contact between them. Neither side considered the third alternative: *covenantalism*.

The dualism between methodological individualism and methodological collectivism still persists in today's Protestant world. Meanwhile, nobody in the muddled middle offers exegetical solutions as to how either extreme can be avoided. Only the theonomists avoid both positions as well as the muddled middle because they appeal systematically to the texts of the Bible in order to derive their social and economic theories.

Any appeal to the Mosaic law makes all of the other factions very nervous. Every member of every faction knows that if he were applying for a teaching position, and those with the authority to hire him knew that he not only defends the Mosaic law and its civil sanctions, he is ready to teach this in the classroom, he would never be hired. The employment factor has shaped the economic worldview that economists adopt. (Reward and response!) It did in my case, too. I decided to retain my theonomic worldview and earn my living outside of academia. That was the price I knew I had to pay. The problem is, collegiate academics who write summaries of contemporary views of economics have been shaped by their choice of worldviews. Their worldviews determine who gets discussed in their essays and who gets conveniently blacked out. This is why my economic commentary on the Bible receives very few footnotes from the rival economic factions within the Protestant community. It is tied too closely to the Mosaic law. An academic blackout is operating.[27]

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26. Gary North, *Disobedience and Defeat: An Economic Commentary on the Historical Books* (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, 2012), ch. 14.

27. For example, Calvin College economist John Tiemstra, whose self-announced comprehensive 1993 review of recent literature in Christian economics, referred to only one of my works, *An Introduction to Christian Economics* (1973). John P. Tiemstra,

My New Testament applications of the principle of the leaven are fundamental to an understanding of the dominion covenant. I dare not pass over them in silence on the assumption that most Christians will automatically make the theological connections between the principle of the leaven and the concept of Christendom's tasks in history. Most Christians have never even thought about such matters.[28]

H. The Lord's Supper

Because the peace offering was a covenant act requiring the services of a priest, we need to ask this question: Is there a connection between this sacrifice and the sacrament of the Lord's Supper? The Lord's Supper involves participants in a formal act of covenant renewal. It cannot be an offering for sin, since the taking of communion must be preceded by inner confession of personal sins of omission and commission, and also by formal acts of restitution for crimes involving a victim.[29] The emphasis is on self-examination: "But let a man examine

"Christianity and Economics: A Review of the Recent Literature," *Christian Scholar's Review*, XXII (1993), pp. 227, 228. This essay purported to be a survey of the literature from 1978 to 1993. Tiemstra was well aware of my later exegetical works, since he cited Craig M. Gay's 1992 essay in the same journal, which unfavorably cited *The Sinai Strategy* (1985) and *Inherit the Earth* (1987) as well as David Chilton's *Productive Christians in an Age of Guilt-Manipulators* (1981), and then dismissed them all as right-wing liberation theology in which "human existence has been reduced to the material and economic and the gospel has been thoroughly immanentized." Craig M. Gay, "When Evangelicals Take Capitalism Seriously," *ibid.*, XXI (1992), p. 358. Gay offered no support for his rhetorical outburst: no Bible texts and no books that have offered biblical refutations. Tiemstra referred repeatedly to Sider's *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger*, but he never mentioned Chilton's detailed refutation. Blackout! He criticized Ronald Nash's defense of Austrian economics as not being exegetically based, which is quite correct; it wasn't, and self-consciously so. Nash denied that there can be an explicitly Christian economics, so why should he appeal to the Bible? I have criticized Nash for many years for just this epistemological weakness. Having dismissed Nash as the Austrian School's only cited representative, Tiemstra then announced: "The Christian writers who have opted for the Austrian approach have so far failed to cdnect their work very firmly with the basic biblical principles..." (p. 241). He did not mention my name in this context or in any other epistemological context. Blackout! This does the serious Christian reader a great disservice. It keeps him away from sources of biblical exegesis. Tiemstra's blackout strategy is representative of conservative Protestant scholarship generally, from Dallas Seminary to Calvin College, from fundamentalism to neo-evangelicalism. Refusing to take the Old Testament seriously, these men pretend that nobody else should, either. They refuse to interact with the Pentateuch or anyone who does. The Mosaic law appalls them. They will not try to learn from it, let alone agree to submit to it.

28. Note to any Jews who are still with me: neither have most Jews.

29. Gary North, *Authority and Dominion*, ch. 33; see also Gary North, *Victim's Rights: The Biblical View of Civil Justice* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1990).

himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body" (I Cor. 11:28–29). The peace offering was a meal eaten by the donor, the only shared meal in the Levitical system's five sacrifices.[30] The Lord's Supper is also a shared meal. But is the Lord's Supper an act of covenant renewal analogous to the freewill offering of Leviticus 7? I think not. The Lord's Supper is judicial. It is an aspect of the covenant oath (point four).[31] Regular participation in the Lord's Supper is required from God's covenant vassals, just as the Passover feast was. It is not optional. It is a regularly scheduled public event. Any church member who refuses to take this sacrament, or who has been excluded from the table by the church, receives a formal declaration from God: "Guilty!" This public declaration takes place every time the Lord's Supper is served by the church. This is one reason why it should be offered weekly: to bring under God's judicial condemnation all those who are not participating, whether inside the church or outside. Calvin believed that the Lord's Supper should be offered *at least* weekly.[32]

In contrast to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, which is analogous to the Mosaic Covenant's sacrament of Passover, the peace offering was optional. It was a self-conscious additional act of sacrifice, "beyond the call of duty."

I. Living Sacrifices

Extra sacrifice in the New Covenant is not morally optional. Paul called men to present their bodies as living sacrifices (Rom. 12:1).[33] This is his concept of minimal service, not service beyond the call of duty. This is another piece of evidence that *the New Testament's moral and legal requirements are more rigorous than the Old Testament's requirements*. To those who have been given more by God, more is required by God (Luke 12:47–48).[34]

It is a serious (but common) mistake today to imagine that Jesus somehow reduced the degree of responsibility of His followers in the

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30. R. K. Harrison, *Leviticus: An Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 1980), p. 79.

31. Sutton, *That You May Prosper*, ch. 4.

32. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (1559), IV:XVII:43.

33. Gary North, *Cooperation and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Romans*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2000] 2012), ch. 8.

34. Gary North, *Treasure and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Luke*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2000] 2012), ch. 28.

New Covenant era. On the contrary, He increased it. Anyone who argues to the contrary had better have a good explanation for the fact that modern Christians are not supposed to become polygamists, which was permitted in the Old Covenant era.[35] He had also better be ready to explain why the legal grounds for divorce are more rigorous in the New Covenant era. "They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so" (Matt. 19:7–8).[36] What was exceptional for the Mosaic Covenant saint—the peace offering—becomes the required way of life for the New Covenant saint. When the temple's barriers came down, the covenant-keeper's degree of responsibility went up. Symbolically, this took place when the veil of the temple was torn at Christ's death.

The emphasis in Romans 12:1 is on the Christian *way of life*. It refers to the *moral* realm rather than to the judicial. Presenting one's body as a living sacrifice is fundamental to a life of *progressive sanctification*, not a discrete formal act of legal justification. In contrast to progressive sanctification, the Lord's Supper is specifically and uniquely judicial, a legal status shared only with the sacrament of baptism. *The Western church has always regarded the sacraments as uniquely judicial*.[37] The Lord's Supper is a formal announcement of "guilty" or "not

35. Gary North, *Hierarchy and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on First Timothy*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2001] 2012), ch. 3.

36. *Ibid*., Appendix A: "Divorce and Remarriage."

37. Notice, I did not write "solely judicial." There is an element of mystery in the sacraments, and no single attribute suffices to encompass their meaning. See Ronald S. Wallace, *Calvin's Doctrine of the Word and Sacrament* (Tyler, Texas: Geneva Divinity School Press, [1953] 1982). But the Western church has always called these rituals sacraments, not mysteries, which is what Eastern Orthodoxy calls them. The word sacrament was adopted by the church from the Latin word *sacramentum*, a military oath of enlistment. The judicial and covenantal aspect of these rites is emphasized by the Western church. The New Testament does not use the word *sacrament*, nor is the Greek word *musterion* applied to either rite or any outward observance. See "Sacrament," *Cyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*, 12 vols., eds. John M'Clintock and James Strong (New York: Harper & Bros., 1894), IX, p. 212.

Calvin rejected as irrelevant of this Roman military view of the meaning of the word "sacrament." Calvin, *Institutes*, IV:XIV:13. He stressed the mystery aspect instead. But by ignoring the self-maledictory covenantal oath aspect of both sacraments, he was led to identify several Old Covenant manifestations of God's promises as sacraments: Noah's rainbow (a non-maledictory oath: no universal destruction by flood), Abraham's light in a smoking pot (Gen. 15:17), the watery fleece on dry ground and dry fleece on damp ground (Jud. 6:37–38), and the backward-moving shadow on Hezekiah's sundial (II Kings 20:9–11). *Institutes*, IV:XIV:18. His interpretation of these events as sacraments has not been followed by Calvinists or other Protestants.

guilty" in the name of God by God's representative agents, church elders. This is why personal confession of sin must be made in advance of the sacrament, a fact testified to by the churches' historic use of congregational prayers of public confession. People are required to confess "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth" to God prior to taking communion.

Paul compared progressive sanctification to running a race: "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible" (I Cor. 9:24–25). He said: "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:14). The Epistle to the Hebrews says: "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us" (Heb. 12:1). The imagery is that of a step-by-step lifetime race against runners who are not equally committed to obeying God. We beat them by persevering in the race.

The goal of progressive sanctification is to reduce one's level of sinfulness over time. This is the meaning of progressive sanctification: *a progressive reduction of sinful thought and behavior*. We are to conform ourselves progressively to Christ's example of perfect humanity (though of course not His divinity). "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren" (Rom. 8:29). Paul introduced his discussion of communion with this imperative: "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (I Cor. 11:1).[38] By doing so, we are to reduce the number of evil thoughts and acts that we must confess prior to communion. The increase in progressive sanctification is therefore related to communion (legal justification), but the two are not the same.

One manifestation of our personal quest for peace with God is the presentation of gifts and offerings above the mandatory tithe. These constitute the New Covenant's version of the animal sacrifice of the peace offering. When the pastor calls publicly for "tithes and offerings," meaning money for the church, he is calling for the peace of

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38. Gary North, *Judgment and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on First Corinthians*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2001] 2012), ch. 14.

God. Tithes are obligatory payments.[39] Offerings in this context are peace offerings that are analogous to the sacrificial peace offering of Leviticus 7.

J. Progressive Corporate Sanctification

Sanctification in the modern pietistic church is understood as an exclusively personal spiritual transformation. When pressed, however, the defenders of this view will probably admit that there has been progressive sanctification of the church. They will assert that their favorite theological system is far superior to anything understood by the early church. It may or may not be superior, but at least they regard it as such. Except for those in the Eastern Orthodox tradition, most will admit freely that the church's confessions are more detailed and rigorous than the early creeds. Most Christians will also admit that science and technology have made the world a better place to live in, except for the threat of modern war, terrorism, and pollution.[40]

Therein lies their theological problem. *First*, if the world is inevitably heading toward accelerating moral corruption—the explicit view of most premillennialists and amillennialists[41]—then why should there have been so much progress in Western history? Are we to conclude that accelerating theological apostasy and moral rebellion produce economic, social, and political progress? Where is this taught in the Bible? Or, *second*, should we begin to look more closely at the relationship between the progress in Christian theology and church creeds and progress in society? Could these two seemingly independent developments be related positively rather than inversely?[42] This is a topic that is almost never discussed by Christians, including seminary professors. Why not? Because it raises major questions regarding Christians' corporate responsibility for external progress or retrogression in the wider community.

Pietistic Christians do not want to consider the practical implications in their lives of either of these possibilities, so they do their best to avoid thinking about the cultural aspects of the churches' pro-

39. Gary North, *The Covenantal Tithe* (Powder Springs, Georgia: American Vision, 2011).

40. On pollution, see Appendix G:I, and North, *Authority and Dominion*, Appendixes J, K.

41. Gary North, *Millennialism and Social Theory* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1990), ch. 4.

42. R. J. Rushdoony, *Foundations of Social Order: Studies in the Creeds and Councils of the Early Church* (Vallecito, California: Ross House, [1968] 2007).

gressive corporate sanctification. They define away the problem by limiting to the human heart the Holy Spirit's process of sanctification over time. This is the heart of pietism. If this process of progressive sanctification should ever escape this arbitrary boundary, there is no telling where it would stop. It might end up by encompassing everything.[43] If it did, Christians *as a corporate community* would become responsible for every area of life.[44] This would mean that God's dominion covenant is still in force.[45] This is precisely what pietists are trying to avoid.

The problem is, the Spirit's process of corporate sanctification keeps breaking pietism's arbitrary barriers. First, it spills over into the church and family. We baptize our children.[46] We catechize them. We are supposed to send them to Christian schools.[47] In doing these things, we admit that we have institutional responsibilities. But if we have these responsibilities before God, then He must be willing to impose sanctions in terms of our obedience to His laws. Second, we must seek to change the world by imposing God's Bible-specified sanctions as His legal representatives in history. Few Christians today are willing to affirm that all of God's directly imposed sanctions are exclusively limited to heaven and the day of final judgment. They want sanctions exercised in the Christian family, for example. Nevertheless, the vast majority of contemporary Bible-believing Christians draw a defensive boundary against God's negative sanctions around the state and the external, "common grace" society.[48] The state and

43. Gary North, *Is the World Running Down? Crisis in the Christian Worldview* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1988), Appendix C: "Comprehensive Redemption: A Theology for Social Action."

44. This thought is too horrifying for modern schools of Protestant social thought to consider, with these exceptions: the Social Gospel, Christian Reconstruction, and liberation theology. The Social Gospel has been fading in popularity throughout the post-World War II era, although many of its tenets have been adopted by academic neo-evangelicals: the *Sojourners*, Evangelicals for Social Action, Wheaton College, Calvin College, *Christianity Today* axis. With the spectacular collapse of the ideology of Marxism, 1989–91, liberation theology had its ideological props knocked out from under it. See Joel McDurmon, *God versus Socialism: A Biblical Critique of the New Social Gospel* (Powder Sprinfs, Georgia: American Vision, 2009).

45. Gary North, *Sovereignty and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Genesis* (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, 2012), chaps. 3, 4.

46. David Chilton, "Infant Baptism and Covenantal Responsibility," *Journal of Christian Reconstruction*, IV (Winter 1977–78), pp. 79–86.

47. Robert L. Thoburn, *The Children Trap: The Biblical Blueprint for Education* (Ft. Worth, Texas: Dominion Press, 1986), co-published by Thomas Nelson Sons, Nashville, Tennessee.

48. North, *Millennialism and Social Theory*, ch. 7.

society generally, they insist, are to be protected from an invasion by the biblical covenant, with its revealed laws and negative civil sanctions.[49] "This far, but no farther!" they proclaim. But they cannot say exactly why, biblically speaking.

1. Restricting the State: Biblical Casuistry

If people believe that the political order is immune from God's negative sanctions in history, they will tolerate or even encourage the state's officers to impose the state's autonomous sanctions over all other institutions. The state will then seek to impose legal boundaries on every other institution.[50] It is never a question of "sanctions vs. no sanctions" in history. It is always a question of *whose* sanctions and *which* sanctions in terms of whose law.[51] There is no neutrality. There are no political vacuums.[52]

The state, like every other institution, must be captured for God. It is to be restricted to its judicially proper boundaries by God's law and by other Christian institutions. *The state is not to place its autonomous limits on the institutions of the world; the world's institutions are to place God's Bible-revealed limits on the state*. This means that in order for political liberty to flourish, the whole world must be reformed by means of the preaching of the gospel and by the working out and application of the principles of God's law in history—the ancient moral discipline of casuistry.[53] This time, however, casuistry must be Bible-based, not Greek philosophy-based by way of Thomas Aquinas.

Modern Christian pietists reject such a notion of an explicitly biblical casuistry, just as modern humanists do. They say that the reform of this world is impossible, and therefore a waste of time even to try. They announce to the Christian world, as dispensational theologian

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49. Michael Novak, *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism* (New York: Touchstone-Simon & Schuster/American Enterprise Institute, 1982); Richard John Neuhaus, *The Naked Public Square: Religion and Democracy in America* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1984). For a critique of this position, see Gary North, *Political Polytheism: The Myth of Pluralism* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1989).

50. It is worth noting that the United States Congress long exempted itself from many of its laws, such as quotas (sexual or racial) on staff hiring and firing, and the United States Postal Service monopoly. Congress has its own post office system.

51. North, *Millennialism and Social Theory*, ch. 8.

52. North, *Political Polytheism*, p. xi.

53. Thomas Wood, *English Casuistical Divinity in the Seventeenth Century* (London: S.P.C.K., 1952); Albert R. Jonsen and Stephen Toulmin, *The Abuse of Casuistry: A History of Moral Reasoning* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988); Kenneth E. Kirk, *Conscience and Its Problems: An Introduction to Casuistry*, rev. ed. (London: Longmans, Green, [1936] 1948).

John Walvoord announced: "We know that our efforts to make society Christianized is [sic] futile because the Bible doesn't teach it."[54] They announce, as amillennial theologian Herman Hanko announced, "In the first place, many who strongly advocate Christian social involvement almost always fall into the error of post-millennialism. That is the error of teaching that the Kingdom of Jesus Christ is realized here in this present world by a slow but steady process of social, economic and political evolution."[55] All that we can hope to accomplish, they insist, is to create pockets of resistance (Christian ghettos): defensive efforts that will inevitably be almost completely overcome by Satan's earthly kingdom, unless the Rapture takes place (pre-tribulational dispensationalism) or the final judgment does (amillennialism).[56] Legions of non-predestinarian Christians argue that Bible-based reform efforts are inevitably doomed to failure.[57] God has decreed this, we are assured—just about the only decree that Arminians acknowledge. They are content to achieve a stalemate with humanism, Islam, and the other alternatives to Christianity. They have adopted the stalemate mentality.[58] They cannot successfully defend this culturally retreatist position in terms of the Bible—especially by any literal reading of the confrontational lives and reform message of the Old Testament prophets—but they still refuse to accept the idea that this world can significantly be reformed by Christians acting as Christians in society. All they can say is what Dallas Theological Seminary professor Harold Hoehner said in 1990: "I just can't buy their [the Coalition on Revival's] basic presupposition that we can do anything significant to change the world. And you can sure waste time trying."[59] It never occurs to them that they are wasting a significant part of their lives by not trying, and also by openly discouraging others from trying. Hav-

54. John Walvoord, symposium on "Our Future Hope: Eschatology and Its Role in the Church," *Christianity Today* (Feb. 6, 1987), p. 5–I. See my comments in North, *Rapture Fever: Why Dispensationalism is Paralyzed* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1993), ch. 3.

55. Herman Hanko, *The Christian's Social Calling and the Second Coming of Christ* (South Holland, Michigan: South Holland Protestant Reformed Church, 1970), pp. 1–2. For a critique of Hanko's position, see Kenneth L. Gentry, Jr., *He Shall Have Dominion: A Postmillennial Eschatology*, 2nd ed. (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1997), Appendix A: "Cultural Antinomianism."

56. Gary North, "Ghetto Eschatologies," *Biblical Economics Today*, XIV (April/ May 1992).

57. North, *Millennialism and Social Theory*, ch. 8.

58. Gary North, *Backward, Christian Soldiers? A Manual for Christian Reconstruction* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1984), ch. 11.

59. "Is Christ or Satan Ruler of This World?" *Christianity Today* (March 5, 1990), p. 43.

ing identified New Testament history as a sinking ship, they refuse to polish any brass. They huddle next to the lifeboats, praying that the Captain will issue the "abandon ship" order in time. There are two common forms of this affliction: Rapture fever (dispensational)[60] and pre-parousia paralysis (amillennial).[61]

K. Covenant Sanctions and Social Progress

It is clear from the Old Covenant that there was a predictable relationship between (1) corporate obedience to the *civil* stipulations of the national covenant and (2) visible corporate progress—so visible that even covenant-breaking nations would recognize it:

> Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the Lord my God commanded me, that ye should do so in the land whither ye go to possess it. Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people. For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon him for? And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day? (Deut. 4:5–8)[62]

What was the basis of this predictable relationship? God's covenantal promise. But what was its *temporal judicial mechanism*? It was the civil magistrate's enforcement of God's negative sanctions against public evil-doing. When civil rulers enforced God's law in Mosaic Israel, they removed the judicial basis of God's corporate wrath against the nation. Then the positive acts of obedience to God's Bible-revealed law by millions of individuals could be blessed by God directly.

Thus, a system of *positive feedback over time* was designed by God to overcome the negative effects of sin. The ultimate manifestation of this overcoming of the effects of sin was the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. This is why Christ's literal resurrection is supposed to be the model for all Christian social thought,[63] just as His bodily ascension to the throne of judgment at the right hand of God is supposed to be the model for all Christian political thought. The fact that neither of these doctrines is applied to modern

60. North, *Rapture Fever*.

61. North, *Millennialism and Social Theory*, chaps. 4, 5, and 9.

62. Gary North, *Inheritance and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Deuteronomy*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [1999] 2012), ch. 8: "Evangelism Through Law."

63. Gary North, *Is the World Running Down? Crisis in the Christian Worldview* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1988).

social and political thought by Protestants is one major theological reason why there is no body of explicitly Protestant social and political thought.[64] (The other major theological reason is Protestantism's rejection of the judicially binding character of biblical law.)

Modern conservative Christian thought, both Protestant and Catholic, rests on the presupposition that God does not bring His negative sanctions against evil nations in New Testament history, at least not after 70 A.D.[65] In wartime, predictably, this belief is conveniently forgotten by church members and even occasional attendees, but with the coming of peace, it invariably revives.[66] But if God does bring sanctions in history in terms of His revealed law, then there must be greater progress in those societies that uphold His social laws than in those that reject them. This would make progress in history a function of societies' adherence to the legal terms of God's covenant. The foundation of social progress would have to be understood in terms of a biblical covenantal standard. This would require a radical break with pluralism, the dominant political ideology of the West.[67] So far, the West has not considered such a possibility.[68]

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64. Catholic social and political thought has disintegrated as a result of the rise of liberation theology in the Church since 1965. Catholic social theory was primarily a product of Thomism's natural law categories; it survived well into the twentieth century. It went through a slow transition after 1900, with liberalism making constant inroads. The traditional American hostility to Catholicism in political life was voiced by a liberal Catholic, Paul Blanshard, in two best-selling books: *American Freedom and Catholic Power*, 2nd ed. (1958) and *Communism, Democracy, and Catholic Power* (1951), both published by the Unitarian publishing firm, Beacon Press, located in Boston. With the election to the Presidency in 1960 of John F. Kennedy, a charming secular humanist (and an almost daily adulterer, the public learned two decades later), the old hostility to Catholics in American politics faded rapidly. So did the old Catholicism. On the American Church's transformation see Garry Wills, *Bare Ruined Choirs: Doubt, Prophecy, and Radical Religion* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1972). Wills was himself transformed from traditional Catholicism to political radicalism, 1965–69. Wills' statement on page one regarding the election of 1960 is to the point: "The Catholics' hour had come, though they did not seem to know it; had come, too late, just as their church was disintegrating." On the international Church's transformation, 1965–1970, see Malachi Martin, *The Jesuits: The Society of Jesus and the Betrayal of the Roman Catholic Church* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1987).

65. North, *Millennialism and Social Theory*, ch. 7.

66. That the unprecedented and rapid visible retreat of Soviet Communism from Eastern Europe in the second half of 1989 came in large part as a result of prayer by Christians and resistance by a handful of churches was not considered a serious possibility by the vast majority of political commentators. It was only Communism's incomparable economic failure—itself a very late discovery for liberals, though widely accepted by them astonishingly quickly—that supposedly made this retreat inevitable.

67. North, *Political Polytheism*.

68. When Islam was literally at the gates of Europe in 732 (Arabs) and again in the

Economist and legal theorist F. A. Hayek (d. 1992) made an exceedingly important admission in his multi-volume study, *Law, Legislation and Liberty*. As a classical liberal and a dedicated evolutionist,[69] he rejected the legitimacy of specific civil laws that interfere with personal liberty. He proclaimed the need for a system of civil courts in which only general rules that apply to everyone equally could receive the sanction of civil law. The very generality of abstract law would protect the rights of individuals, he insisted, and civil courts in such a world would protect our liberties. This means that there should not be laws against private, immoral behavior that does not physically harm others, i.e., "victimless crimes." But he added this proviso: "At least where it is not believed that the whole group may be punished by a supernatural power for the sins of individuals, there can arise no such rules from the limitation of conduct towards others, and therefore from the settlements of disputes."[70] He assumed, as all humanists must assume, that a sanctions-bringing supernatural power does not exist. This assumption is incorrect. If it were correct, an explicitly Christian social theory would be impossible to develop. *Christian social theory in a world without God's predictable corporate sanctions would become merely some variety of baptized secularism*. Unfortunately, for over three centuries, Christian theologians have assumed precisely this. They have accepted Hayek's presupposition: God brings no corporate covenantal sanctions in history. They have therefore rejected the whole of the Old Covenant's description of God's sanctions, from the garden of Eden to the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. They have agreed to an implicit alliance with the humanists based on a mutual rejection of God's sanctions in history.

Here is another reason why Christianity has lost so much influence. Its defenders—and the very concept of "defenders" points to

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sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Turks), Christians would have understood the inescapable implication of political pluralism: the opening of the gates to those who would then make Christianity illegal, as their heirs do in every Islamic country today. Now that the disciples of Islam are well inside the gates of Europe, and reproducing at high rates, the future of political pluralism is clear: the conquest of Western Europe by its most ancient foe, i.e., the overcoming of Charles Martel's successful defense of Europe in 732. The demographic war against Western civilization is being conducted in the bedrooms of Europe and those Islamic nations bordering Europe, and the physical heirs of Martel are losing. In Western Europe, only Ireland has a birthrate high enough to maintain a stable population: 2.1 children per family. Population growth will be restored in Western Europe if present trends continue within the Islamic ghettos, however; but then these nations will no longer be either Western or pluralist.

69. North, *Sovereignty and Dominion*, Appendix B.

70. F. A. Hayek, *Rules and Order*, vol. 1 of *Law, Legislation and Liberty*, 3 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973), p. 101.

the problem—cannot legitimately expect to beat something with nothing, yet they keep trying. They proclaim God's total sanctions at the end of time after having denied the existence of His sanctions in our own time. They have denied God's "earnest" (Eph. 1:14) in history. The humanist correctly assumes that any God who refuses to bring sanctions in history can hardly be taken seriously as the cosmic imposer of sanctions outside of history. Jesus understood this perspective. He offered proof to His contemporaries that He could pardon sin eternally by healing bodies historically: "And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts? For whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy), Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house. And he arose, and departed to his house" (Matt. 9:4–7). What contemporary evidence of the coming final sanctions does today's church offer? Only its own self-proclaimed inevitable cultural defeat on this side of Jesus' Second Coming. In short, it seeks to prove God's eternal negative sanctions against covenant-breakers by proclaiming God's historic negative sanctions against covenant-keepers.[71]

Some gospel! Some good news!

L. Total Victory: Final Judgment

Does God expect Christians to be culturally victorious? Yes. Does He expect to achieve perfect victory in time and on earth? No. He does not offer total victory in history to definitively redeemed mankind. Their progressive redemption will not become final in history. Only by transcending the historical process will God's great discontinuous event bring final redemption. Paul's first letter to the Corinthian church spells this out in considerable detail. Those living at Jesus Christ's final return will be changed, in the twinkling of an eye (I Cor. 15:52). The final discontinuous event—the ascension of the saints (sometimes called the "Rapture" by those who do not regard its timing as final) and their instant transformation into perfect humanity—brings the final judgment and the presentation of a cleansed and fully redeemed New Heaven and New Earth. (The New Heaven and New Earth definitively arrived in an imperfect, historical form

71. North, *Millennialism and Social Theory*, ch. 9. See also Gentry, *He Shall Have Dominion*, Appendix B.

with the kingdom of Christ.)[72] The final judgment is that *final oven* in which the leaven-filled, risen kingdom is baked. Peter wrote:

> But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? (II Peter 3:10–12)

The whole earth is going to be consumed eschatologically, thereby producing a new loaf. The whole earth is subject to that final, cataclysmic, *discontinuous* transformation. This implies that the whole earth will at that point have been filled with the leaven of the gospel—not perfect, but ready for the oven. Then our bodies will be transformed, glorified, for "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption" (I Cor. 15:50). *The continuity of history is finally interrupted*. This will mark the end of this world. But this is my point: it will be at the end of the *whole* world. Ask yourself: What area of life will avoid this final conflagration? None. Which part of the leavened dough will be untouched by the blinding heat of the oven? None. Which part of the loaf will be left unbaked? None of it. Time will end at the final judgment. There will be nothing left for the gospel to accomplish in history. Christ's redemption is comprehensive. This does not minimize either the gospel or its effects in history. On the contrary, it affirms both.

M. Boundaries After Calvary

Who owns this world? God does (Ps. 24:1).[73] But because of Adam's fall, Satan became Adam's legal heir: a rebellious, cheating leaseholder under God. From Joshua to Jesus, Satan controlled all parts of the earth that were not controlled by the Israelites. Ever since the defeat of Satan at Calvary, however, the legal boundaries of God's kingdom have been the boundaries of the whole earth. The second Adam, Jesus Christ (I Cor. 15:45), has inherited the worldwide inheritance that had been appropriated by Satan after the rebellion of the

72. North, *Millennialism and Social Theory*, pp. 96–106. On the historical reality of the New Heaven and New Earth, see Isaiah 65:17–20.

73. Gary North, *Confidence and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Psalms* (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, 2012), ch. 5.

first Adam. Christ has delegated management responsibilities over this kingdom to His redeemed people. Their historical task is to buy back—i.e., *redeem*—the whole world. They are not to take it by physical force, except in historically unique cases (e.g., settling a nearly empty land when local tribes resist by force).[74] Extending these legal boundaries in history is a task that cannot legitimately be avoided. We cannot legitimately point to whole portions of the unleavened cultural dough and say: "Well, that's not the responsibility of Christians. The dominion covenant doesn't cover that zone. The law of God doesn't apply there. Neither do His sanctions. Satan owns that section: lock, stock, and barrel. His disciples will have to leaven it."

What does Satan own? Nothing. The very gates of hell cannot prevail against the church (Matt. 16:18). Satan does not hold legal title to anything. Adam had been disinherited by God. Satan occupied territory through Adam's default. Satan visibly lost "squatter's rights" in this world at the cross. Jesus announced in the vision given to John: "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death" (Rev. 1:18). *Satan is today a lawless squatter*. The world belongs to God, and

74. The biblical concept of private land ownership was steadily imposed on land that had been controlled by tribes whose concept of property was either nomadic or tribal-communal. North American Indians fought as tribes and lost as tribes, before and after the "white tribes" arrived. The whites understood this. The English and Dutch used the Iroquois as a buffer against the French, who had a treaty with the Algonquins, the implacable foes of the Iroquois. Individual Indians did not hold title to land; they did not buy and sell land to each other, certainly not irrespective of tribal loyalty. There were sometimes sales of land to whites by tribal chiefs, who may not have understood that the white settlers believed they were buying perpetual rights to the land, but surely the chiefs did not concern themselves about the non-existing property rights to land held by tribe members. The famous purchase by Dutch settlers in 1626 of the land that later became New York City was representative of the Dutch settlement strategy: *purchase whenever possible*. The settlers had received instructions from home stating this explicitly; the Indians "must not be expelled with violence or threats. . . ." Cited by Oscar Theodore Barck, Jr. and Hugh Talmage Leffler, *Colonial America* (New York: Macmillan, 1958), p. 176.

The English (except Roger Williams) were less scrupulous about existing tribal property rights to the land than the Dutch were. They simply imposed the Indians' view of the land on them: "The rules regarding land are lawfully made by those tribes that can successfully hold it by force." *Idem*. This military conquest of Indian land does not, of course, affirm the legitimacy of the United States government's subsequent breaking of peace treaties with them. The other major judicial failure of the North American whites was that they acquiesced to the Indians' concept of collective property on the Federal reservations. They did so as white chiefs, and so was born the longest experiment in compulsory socialism in United States history. That this has been the most notoriously corrupt bureaucratic failure in United States government history should surprise no one.

He has designated it as the inheritance of Christians. But Christians are told to subdue it, *to lease it back from God*, by demonstrating our commitment to the judicial terms of His peace treaty with us. We are to conquer the world progressively by the preaching of the gospel of salvation and either the purchase of the world from our opponents or their conversion to God's kingdom as fellow heirs. Our sword is the *sword of the gospel*.[75] It is still our assignment to subdue the earth, and by the sword of the gospel we can and will conquer in history. This is the dominion covenant. It is mankind's inescapable legacy and obligation. It cannot be evaded. God holds men responsible, both individually and corporately, for its fulfillment.

N. The Question of Continuity

What is the meaning of leaven? The imagery is obvious: *growth and expansion*. But the obviousness of this imagery has become a problem for theologians because of the debate over eschatology. The premillennialist affirms that leaven means growth, but then says that this applies only to Satan's kingdom. He also denies that leaven refers to the historical continuity of the visible kingdom of God in history. The amillennialist, in contrast, affirms historical continuity, but then he denies growth, if by growth we mean a visible expansion of the gospel's cultural effects outside of the narrow confines of the institutional church. Both hermeneutical schools are united with each other against the postmillennialists' interpretation that leaven symbolizes both visible growth and historical continuity, a position which *only* the postmillennialist can defend exegetically with respect to the visible kingdom of God in history.

Jesus spoke forthrightly of His kingdom in terms of leaven. "Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened" (Matt. 13:33). What does leaven do in dough? It raises it. Then the risen dough is baked. But before it is baked, it must rise. There must be no premature removal of the yeast before the hour of baking. History is to be transformed in every area of life by the gospel before the final conflagration.

The dispensationalist, because of the requirements of his premi-

75. The following description is not to be taken literally: "And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God (Rev. 19:15).

llennial theological system, cannot accept the parable of the leaven at face value. If he did, he would have to abandon premillennialism. He cannot allow the leavening process in history to apply to the kingdom of God. On the contrary, the only leavening process in history that he affirms is the kingdom of Satan. Leaven in the older dispensational system is exclusively evil. This is why Leviticus 7:13 and Matthew 13:33 are such painful thorns in the dispensationalist's side.[76]

Jesus in Matthew 13 gave a series of parables regarding the kingdom of God. They are parables that describe historical continuity. The parable of the leaven appears shortly after Jesus' parable of the wheat and tares.

> Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn (Matt. 13:24–30).[77]

The disciples questioned Him about the meaning of this parable. He provided a literal explanation—one so clear that anyone could understand it, except someone using dispensationalism's "literal" hermeneutic:

> He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear (Matt. 13:37–43).

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76. Appendix C: "Leaven as Exclusively Evil."

77. Gary North, *Priorities and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Matthew*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2000] 2012), ch. 29.

But for dispensationalists to hear, they would have to abandon dispensationalism. They prefer not to hear.

When did the kingdom begin? According to this parable, it began with Jesus Christ's first advent: "He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man." What is the field? Not the church, surely: "The field is the world." The institutional church is not even mentioned here. When does the co-mingling of wheat and tares end? At the end of history, Christ's second advent: "The harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world." *There is no third advent*. The events of the so-called Rapture must therefore correspond to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ in final judgment. This is God's promise: *the visible Kingdom of God will enjoy historical continuity*. God's kingdom will expand over time.

There are two competing leavens: righteous and unrighteous. There are two competing kingdoms: God's and Satan's. Satan does not have to be physically present in history in order for his kingdom to be real in history. Neither does Jesus Christ. The expansion of one kingdom in history necessitates the contraction of the other. The question is: Whose kingdom expands in history? The dispensational premillennialists say "Satan's," at least in the so-called Church Age (pre-Rapture). While this is incorrect, it is at least consistent. Amillennialists have not been equally consistent.[78] Members of the Dutch-American tradition have sometimes adopted the language of expansion and victory for Christ's kingdom while denying both with respect to history. They internalize and spiritualize the victory.[79] This abandons culture and law to the devil in the name of spiritual victory.

O. Settling Accounts With God: Definitively and Progressively

Men are supposed to seek peace with God. This peace comes only after they have settled their legal accounts with God by publicly proclaiming their faith in the death of His Son at Calvary as their representative wrath-bearer. In the Mosaic Covenant, there was a special tabernacle-temple sacrifice that expressed this quest for peace. In the New Covenant, this quest is expressed by one's lifelong service to God. We are supposed to become living sacrifices.

78. North, *Millennialism and Social Theory*, chaps. 4, 7, 9.

79. Gary North, *Dominion and Common Grace: The Biblical Basis of Progress* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1987), pp. 123–26.

The distinction between legal justification and moral sanctification is seen here. Men cannot legitimately expect to pay a ransom to God by means of their own works. This payment is available only through faith in Jesus Christ's substitutionary atonement: an act of judicial restitution to God. This personal acceptance of Christ's substitutionary atonement must be manifested publicly: first, by a profession of faith in the saving judicial work of Christ; second, by his subsequent baptism;[80] and third, by his participation in the Lord's Supper. Justification is not earned; it is *imputed* judicially by God—His declaration, "Not guilty." God declares a person legally justified in His sight on the basis of Christ's atoning work, and He then makes this transformation a reality. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (II Cor. 5:17). Sanctification, while also a gift of God, is not exclusively a product of God's imputation. *Definitive* sanctification is exclusively an act of God: the imputation of Christ's moral righteousness to an individual. *Progressive* sanctification in history is not imputed; it is the product of the individual's moral acts of righteousness.[81]

The Bible makes it clear that this process of progressive sanctification overflows the boundary of the human heart. What a man is in his heart he will become externally.

> Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them (Matt. 7:17–20).[82]

Thus, everything he does is supposed to mark him as a redeemed person. This means that institutions owned, controlled, and operated by redeemed people are supposed to be reformed as surely as individuals are. These institutions are to be visibly transformed over time. God promises to bless these institutions compared to institutions run by non-redeemed people by anti-biblical principles.[83]

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80. This includes the legally representative act by his parents in the case of a baptized infant.

81. North, *Unconditional Surrender*, pp. 50–52.

82. North, *Priorities and Dominion*, ch. 18: "By Their Fruits Ye Shall Know Them."

83. The problem of analysis comes when non-redeemed people run their institutions more closely to the external standards of the covenant, while Christians run their institutions by non-biblical standards. The work ethic of the Japanese compared with that of people in the United States is a case in point. God blesses Japan.

Conclusion

The peace offering involved the lawful crossing of a boundary. Man and God could eat a meal together. *This meal required the eating of leaven*. Leaven is the biblical symbol of growth. It represents the expansion of a kingdom in history. God calls His people to extent His kingdom, thereby replacing Satan's.

How is this to be done? First, by preaching the gospel. Second, by conforming ourselves to God's ethical standards: biblical law. The close association among biblical law, cultural dominion, and holiness is visible in the peace offering's requirement of leaven. Third, by imposing the civil law's required negative sanctions on law-breakers before God imposes negative sanctions on society.

This is why any consideration of God's law cannot legitimately avoid a consideration of the law's mandated sanctions. God brings His sanctions, positive and negative, in history. These sanctions are not limited to individual human beings. They affect every institution. Greg Bahnsen's assessment is correct:

> The reign of Christ—His Messianic kingdom—is meant to subdue every enemy of righteousness, as Paradise is regained for fallen men by the Savior. As Isaac Watts poetically expressed it: "He comes to make His blessings flow, Far as the curse is found." Everything touched by the guilt and pollution of sin is the object of the Messiah's kingly triumph—everything. The kingdom of Christ not only brings forgiveness and new heart-love for God; it also brings concrete obedience to God in all walks of life. Those things which stand in opposition to God and His purposes and His character are to be overthrown by the dynamic reign of the Messianic King. The effects of Christ's dominion are to be evident on earth, among all nations, and throughout the range of human activity.[84]

God progressively brings His kingdom to fruition over time in terms of His covenant's standards. He makes His kingdom visible in history as surely as He makes His people visible in history: through (1) their public professions of faith and subsequent actions and (2) His visible responses to them. The visible boundaries of Christ's earthly kingdom are progressively extended in history by means of the preaching of the gospel, by men's responses to this preaching, and by their subsequent external and internal obedience to the ethical boundaries of God's Bible-revealed law. This is all grace: "For by

84. Greg L. Bahnsen, "This World and the Kingdom of God" (1982), in Gary DeMar and Peter J. Leithart, *The Reduction of Christianity: A Biblical Response to Dave Hunt* (Ft. Worth, Texas: Dominion Press, 1988), p. 355.

grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:8–10).

The leaven of the Mosaic Testament's sacrifices symbolized this process of progressive sanctification in history. Men brought the best of their fields to God in leavened form. This leavened offering symbolized the full development in history of the best gifts they had received from God. Today, we do the same with our lives. Representationally, this process of moral sanctification in history has an ecclesiastical manifestation in men's *gifts and offerings above the ecclesiastically mandatory tithe*. We no longer bring an animal to be sacrificed; we bring the fruits of our labor, embodied in the form of money. We bring our voluntary offerings.

God rewards this faithfulness in history. He brings positive sanctions to His covenant people in history. This is the basis of the expansion of His kingdom progressively over time. Any attempt to deny the covenantal relationship between faithfulness and blessing in history is necessarily an attack on the idea that God's kingdom steadily replaces Satan's in history. It does not deny the leavening process in history; it asserts instead that Satan's leaven triumphs in history. Any denial of the success of the leaven of the gospel in history is necessarily and inescapably also an assertion of the success of the leaven of satanic rebellion in history. There is no neutrality. Beware the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees, but beware also the hypothetical unleaven of pessimillennial eschatologies.[85]

85. North, *Millennialism and Social Theory*, chaps. 4, 7.

4

CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY

> *And the* Lord *spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If a soul shall sin through ignorance against any of the commandments of the* Lord *concerning things which ought not to be done, and shall do against any of them: If the priest that is anointed do sin according to the sin of the people; then let him bring for his sin, which he hath sinned, a young bullock without blemish unto the* Lord *for a sin offering.*
>
> LEVITICUS 4:1–3

> *When a ruler hath sinned, and done somewhat through ignorance against any of the commandments of the* Lord *his God concerning things which should not be done, and is guilty; Or if his sin, wherein he hath sinned, come to his knowledge; he shall bring his offering, a kid of the goats, a male without blemish: And he shall lay his hand upon the head of the goat, and kill it in the place where they kill the burnt offering before the* Lord*: it is a sin offering.*
>
> LEVITICUS 4:22–24

The theocentric message of these two judicially unified passages is God as the sanctions-bringer. Sanctions refer to point four of the biblical covenant model.[1]

A. Placating a Holy God

God must be placated for sin. When He is not placated by sinners under His authority, He threatens negative corporate sanctions against them. Those people who are innocent of open rebellion will nevertheless suffer the consequences merely by assenting to the transgres-

1. Ray R. Sutton, *That You May Prosper: Dominion By Covenant*, 2nd ed. (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, [1987] 1992), ch. 4. Gary North, *Unconditional Surrender: God's Program for Victory* (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, 2010), ch. 4.

sion through inaction. To avoid negative corporate sanctions, societies conform to God's mandatory means of placating Him publicly through formal repentance.

In the Mosaic Covenant, the sin offerings were the mandatory means of placating God.[2] They are also known as the *purification* offerings. These offerings, more than any other offering in Leviticus—and perhaps more than any other passage in Scripture—established the judicial principle of corporate responsibility. They raised the issue of hierarchical representation (point two), but in the context of corporate sanctions (point four). The judicial issue is *oath-breaking*.

The purpose of the purification offerings ("sin offerings": KJV), the fourth sacrifice, was the restoration of sinful people to the presence of God after a covenantal oath had been broken through sin. Without these offerings, the Israelites could not lawfully cross the boundaries associated with God's sanctuary: local (tabernacle) and regional (nation). The people needed double protection: from their own sins and from the sins of their covenantal representatives, the priests and princes. Rulers had to offer sacrifices for their own sins in order purify the boundaries in which God resided: the temple-tabernacle and the nation.

The sins in question were unintentional. C. Van Dam argued that this unintentionality has a specific meaning: to wander or go astray.[3] Van Dam cited Leviticus 4:13: "And if the whole congregation of Israel sin through ignorance, and the thing be hid from the eyes of the assembly, and they have done somewhat against any of the commandments of the LORD concerning things which should not be done, and are guilty."

The context of these verses is *the legal relationship between the people and a ruler*. To speak of going astray within a context of judicial hierarchy has the implication that someone in authority has taken the lead: the biblical shepherd and sheep relationship. It is never said anywhere in the text precisely what these sins were. Presumably, they were not major, self-conscious sins on the part of the congregation, since the atoning rituals listed in this passage applied to unintentional sins. Yet even a minor sin committed by a priest threatened the whole community.

The required offerings in Leviticus 4:1–3 were called purification

2. In the case of Nineveh, fasting and sackcloth were the required means (Jonah 3:5).

3. C. Van Dam, "The Meaning of *Shegagah*," in *Unity in Diversity*, ed. Riemer Faber (Hamilton, Ontario: Senate of the Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches, 1989), pp. 13–23.

offerings.[4] They had to do with the tabernacle and temple, God's dwelling place, the geographical location around which He had drawn a boundary. Wenham wrote: "Under the Levitical laws the blood of the purification offering was used to cleanse the tabernacle from the pollution of sin. . . . [T]he primary purpose of this purification was to make possible the continuing presence of God among his people."[5] Sin, if it was not judicially dealt with according to God's holy standards, would drive God away from His place of residence among His covenant people. This in turn would open the nation to invaders, for God would no longer defend the nation's boundaries. Israel would be invaded and oppressed by foreigners dwelling in the land, or worse, invaded and then dragged into captivity. This was the threat that made mandatory a series of acts of ritual cleansing.

The house of God was a place of mediation.[6] The purification offering was therefore also associated with God's hierarchical authority over man.[7] The priest, as the representative of the nation, was required to make atonement in order to protect society. He was the person who had legal access to the place of hierarchical mediation between God and His people.

B. Broken Oaths

Leviticus 4 is entirely devoted to the various atoning rituals for unintentional sins: by priest, congregation, civil ruler, and common citizen. It begins, significantly, with the sin of the priest. The New American Standard Version translates the introductory clause of verse three as follows: "if the anointed priest sins so as to bring guilt on the people. . . ." The New English Bible translates it exactly the same way. The Revised Standard Version reads: "if it is the anointed priest who sins, thus bringing guilt on the people. . . ." There is no doubt that the priest could commit a sin which in some way brought into jeopardy all those who were under his authority. It was not just that he sinned on his own behalf; he sinned *representatively*. In contrast, this high degree of corporate responsibility for unintentional sins did not rest upon the civil ruler, as we shall see.[8]

4. Gordon J. Wenham, *The Book of Leviticus* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1979), p. 84.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 101.

6. James B. Jordan, *Covenant Sequence in Leviticus and Deuteronomy* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1989), p. 22.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 25.

8. I am not speaking here of intentional sins of a civil ruler, such as in the case of David,

How could the priest's unintentional sin bring the people under visible judgment? Because of the structure of the biblical covenant. Responsibility is covenantal, which means that it is imposed *hierarchically*. Human accountability is simultaneously upward and downward. God is at the top of the hierarchy; nature is at the bottom. In between, God gives men and women varying degrees of accountability, depending on their ordained offices, their economic positions, and their social roles.

Because the idea of the covenant is foreign to the thinking of modern Christians, they have tended to become supporters of a spurious humanist individualism, both philosophically (nominalism)[9] and politically (right-wing Enlightenment thought),[10] though frequently in the name of Christianity. It is therefore necessary to explore the concepts of corporate responsibility and judicial representation at considerable length in this chapter. There is no way to understand Leviticus 4 correctly if we rely on individualism as either our ethical presupposition or our epistemological presupposition.

Unfortunately, because of the influence the anti-covenantal individualism of modern fundamentalism, evangelical Christians are not accustomed to thinking in terms of biblical covenantal corporatism, either ecclesiastically or politically. This is why Leviticus 4 is so important for the establishment of a systematically biblical social theory: it establishes beyond question *the representative character of covenantal office-holding*. The dual covenantal oaths of allegiance, civil and ecclesiastical, can be broken through sin, and there must be a means of restoring covenant loyalty. This must be done through acts of sacrifice: *covenant renewal*. These dual covenants are not strictly personal, as modern individualism would have it. As Milgrom said, Leviticus presents a picture of corporate responsibility. If sin is not checked, people risk coming under God's negative sanctions in history when God brings His wrath against the evildoers: "...when the evildoers are punished they bring down the righteous with them. Those who perish with the wicked are not entirely blameless, however. They are inadvertent sinners who, by having allowed the wicked to flourish, have also contributed to the pollution of the sanctuary."[11]

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who intentionally numbered the people in peacetime, against the advice of Joab (II Sam. 24).

9. See the definitions of nominalism and realism in chapter 6, footnotes 19 and 20.

10. Gary North, *Hierarchy and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on First Timothy*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2001] 2012), Appendix C: "Adam Smith's Theory of Economic Sanctions."

11. Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, vol. 3 of *The Anchor Bible* (New York: Doubleday, 1991), p. 49; cf. p. 261.

This indicates that those who are judicially subordinate to a lawful office-holder have a moral responsibility before God to call a halt publicly to the evil committed by that office-holder—a prophetic responsibility. If they fail to exercise this responsibility, the nation will be brought under God's negative sanctions. It is crucial for any biblical theory of institutional government to understand this point: if God did not back up His prophets with predictable negative corporate sanctions in history, the prophetic office would have very little power. Modern pietists, whose name is Legion, and modern political pluralists, whose name is *vox populi*, insist that God no longer imposes predictable sanctions in history in terms of His covenant law and its specified sanctions. They have therefore implicitly denied the legitimacy of the prophetic function, and have therefore also denied the legitimacy of the judicial principle of biblical republicanism: bringing rulers to account for their actions. This leaves them with some version of humanism as the basis of their self-professed republicanism: natural law theory. But natural law theory does not provide statutes (case laws): authoritative guidelines for the application of its supposedly universal judicial principles.

This passage has ramifications far beyond the Mosaic Covenant's sacrificial system. We need to explore some of these ramifications.[12] We need to understand how the representative priest-nation relationship was archetypal for other covenantal relationships in the Old Covenant. To understand this judicial relationship more readily, let us begin with that most crucial of all representatives in Old Covenant history, Adam.

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12. The problem with conventional Bible commentaries written by Bible-believing scholars is that they focus almost exclusively on the narrowly theological implications of a passage, while ignoring its implications outside the seven loci of seventeenth-century Protestant scholastic theology: God, man, sin, salvation, Christology, the church, and the last things. At best, there may be some attempt to identify the events chronologically. In contrast, Bible commentaries written by liberals devote extraordinary amounts of space on determining which anonymous (mythical) writer—J, E, D, or P—wrote the verse, and for what purposes. But at least they sometimes do attempt to discuss the political, social, economic, or judicial aspects of the verse. The conservatives write as if these passages did not raise major questions for social theory and practice. Because of this long tradition of circumscribed commentating, it sometimes may appear to readers that I am using Bible verses to spin whole systems of speculative applications. Speculative they may be at times. Relevant to the text? Yes—just not familiar or intuitive to those who have been conditioned to think scholastically and pietistically rather than covenantally.

C. Original Sin and Covenantal Hierarchy

Adam broke covenant with God. He committed sacrilege (church), treason (state), and attempted parricide (family).[13] Adam in his rebellion was seeking three offices: high priest, king, and founding father—not as a creature under God but as the Creator. He sought original control of the apex of power over all three covenantal hierarchies, a position occupied exclusively by God. This act of judicial rebellion led to his formal disinheritance by God. This was an appropriate response by a father to a son who had attempted to gain the inheritance early by bringing formal accusations of criminal behavior against the father.

By disinheriting Adam, God also disinherited Adam's biological descendants. Thus, the sin of Adam had judicial repercussions on his children and children's children. It also had repercussions in the creation. The world was brought under a curse (Gen. 3:18). "For the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will" (Rom. 8:20a, NASB). The effects of Adam's sin spread downward: down through time and down through the creation. Adam, as the delegated covenantal head of church, state, and family, brought God's negative sanctions against him and all those under his covenantal authority.

1. Inherited Sin

Covenant-breaking man resists such a hierarchical concept of responsibility. He wants to believe that he sins only on his own behalf. The doctrine of inherited (original) sin—his legal status as *God's disinherited heir*—thwarts man's doctrine of human auto-nomy. Self-proclaimed autonomous man sees himself as the sole source of his own broken covenant, assuming that he even admits the existence of any covenant. *This view of sin asserts that each person implicitly possesses the*

13. Attempted parricide—executing a parent—was inherent in Adam's decision to listen to Satan's accusation against God: that God was a liar, that Adam would not surely die by eating the forbidden fruit (Gen. 3:4). If true, then God was not who He said He was: God the enforcer, the sanctions-bringer. This would mean that God had lied about the nature of Deity; He was asking men to worship a false god. Such a request was a capital crime under the Old Covenant (Deut. 13:6–11). This was the one execution in which a family member could lawfully participate in the stoning; he had to cast the first stone (Deut. 13:9). Satan needed two witnesses to bring this accusation against God, for two witnesses are required to press a capital crime in a biblical court (Num. 35:30). The two witnesses committed perjury, so they became subject to the punishment that would have applied to the victim: death (Deut. 19:16–19). See Gary North, *Sovereignty and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Genesis* (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [1987] 2012), Appendix E: "Witnesses and Judges."

power of sin-free living. A person may sin, but this sinning is supposedly of his own free will. Each person repeats the fall of Adam, it is asserted; without this morally contingent, case-by-case repetition of Adam's sin, all individuals would automatically gain heaven as God's lawful heirs. Such a view of sin rejects the biblical doctrine of *corporate disinheritance*. Mankind as a whole has been lawfully disinherited by God. All men are brothers in the flesh apart from regeneration: disinherited sons.[14]

This doctrine of *uninherited sin* was first formulated by the British monk Pelagius in the early fifth century, A.D. Calvinist theologian B. B. Warfield summarized the core of Pelagianism: "It lies in the assumption of the plenary ability of man; his ability to do all that righteousness can demand,—to work out not only his own salvation, but also his own perfection. This is the core of the whole theory; and all the other postulates not only depend upon it, but arise out of it."[15] This meant a denial by the Pelagians of God's grace in salvation. Of the theology of the Pelagians, Warfield wrote on the next page: "It was in order that they might deny that man needed help, that they denied that Adam's sin had any further effect on his posterity than might arise from his bad example."

2. Hierarchical Responsibility

Because of the existence of covenant sanctions, the doctrine of covenantal hierarchy leads us to conclude that responsibility is both upward and downward. Those who are under the legal authority of a covenantal officer are under the historical sanctions of God, both positive and negative, which God applies to them through this ordained agent and also sometimes because of him. *Authority is always hierarchical. It is therefore necessarily representative*.[16] No one can legiti-

14. The liberals' refrain about "the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man" is superficially biblical. The phrase means the opposite of what they think it means. The fatherhood of God is based theologically on the literal creation of man by God, a doctrine that liberals reject. "God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation" (Acts 17:24–26).

15. B. B. Warfield, "Introductory Essay on Augustin and the Pelagian Controversy," in Philip Schaff (ed.), *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, vol. V, *Saint Augustin: Anti-Pelagian Writings* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, [1887] 1971), p. xiv.

16. Sutton, *That You May Prosper*, ch. 2.

mately claim judicial innocence based merely on his claim of autonomy. Participation in any covenantal institution is inevitably a form of assent to representative authority, though always limited by God's law in the degree of required obedience.[17]

The example of an army under the authority of a military commander is an easily understood example (i.e., "representative") of the principle of collective sanctions. If he makes a serious mistake, the army is defeated, with negative consequences for civilians back home. If he does well, the army is victorious. In the first instance, the defeat of the troops and the subsequent subjection of the civilians may have no immediate connection to the specific nature of their own personal sins, but there is surely a *mediate* connection. They are brought under judgment because of the representative character of military authority. Similarly with the positive sanction of military victory: it is mediated through the commander.

We readily understand this principle with regard to military commanders. Few people today understand it with respect to New covenant priests (clerics),[18] yet Mosaic law emphasized the representative sins of priests far more than the representative sins of military commanders.

D. Covenantal Allegiance

To participate in a specifically covenantal institution—church, state, or family—the individual must agree to obey those holding lawful office above him. This agreement is either explicit, as in the case of a naturalized citizen, or implicit, as in the case of minor children within a family, or the case of resident aliens living within the borders of a civil jurisdiction. There are sanctions, positive and negative, attached to such covenant membership. These sanctions are inherent in the very nature of the covenant; they cannot lawfully be evaded. What are sanctions? They are blessings and cursings legally applied by representative authorities to a special, set-apart people, i.e., a *sanctified* group.[19]

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17. Gary North, *When Justice Is Aborted: Biblical Standards for Non-Violent Resistance* (Ft. Worth, Texas: Dominion Press, 1989); cf. *Christianity and Civilization*, Nos. 2 and 3 (1983): *The Theology of Christian Resistance* and *Tactics of Christian Resistance*.

18. A cleric does not offer atoning sacrifice, unlike an Old Covenant priest.

19. In the New Testament, saints are God's sanctified people: holy (set apart) and under His unique covenant sanctions.

1. Definitive Allegiance

Covenantal allegiance is definitive: it begins at a particular point in time. A person swears an oath in the presence of other men—God's officially sanctioned, representative, covenantal officers in history—that he will abide by the terms of a particular covenant. Even in the case of family and civil covenants that are officially secular, the person administering the oath still administers it as God's designated agent in history, whether the particular society recognizes this subordinate legal status or not. *Judicially speaking, the most important aspect of government is the content of the oath*. The oath is central. The oath invokes the covenant: sovereignty, authority, law, sanctions, and inheritance. This is why, in seeking to understand the actual operations of any covenantal organization, a researcher must always do two things: *follow the money* and *examine the oath*.

In the church covenant, baptism is the definitive oath-sign that establishes the covenant. In the Old Covenant era, this visible covenantal act was circumcision.[20] This was normally a representative act, though there were sometimes voluntary conversions by adults. Circumcision also was applied representatively to household foreign slaves (Gen. 17:12–13). In the New Covenant, this act of definitive covenantal bonding is established directly through adult baptism, but also representatively in the case of infant baptism or the baptism of mentally incompetent children who are under the judicial authority of a baptized parent.[21] God places a legal claim on those who are baptized. He places them under the threat of covenant sanctions, both positive and negative. This is the meaning of oath signs.[22]

In the civil covenant, citizenship may be gained either by birth

20. Meredith G. Kline, *By Oath Consigned: A Reinterpretation of the Covenant Signs of Circumcision and Baptism* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1968), ch. 3.

21. Only one baptized parent is necessary to establish the legal ground for baptizing a child. One baptized parent establishes the *legal status* of holiness for the child. This is the legal basis for household baptisms (Acts 16:14–15, 33): not the conversion (saving faith as such) of all those family members being baptized, but their special legal status in history as members of a God-sanctified household. The presence of one converted spouse brings God's special blessings to that household. This is the biblical doctrine of *household sanctification*. "For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy" (I Cor. 7:14). Neither the unbelieving spouse nor the child is automatically regenerated on the basis of the saving faith of the saved spouse, but they are made beneficiaries of the covenant in history. God places his legal claim on the baptized person as the beneficiary of His blessings, whether or not the person knows of his subordinate legal status. Ray Sutton, "Household Baptisms," *Covenant Renewal*, II (Aug. 1988).

22. Kline, *By Oath Consigned*, ch. 5.

or by legal naturalization. Those who possess citizenship are beneficiaries of certain blessings, but they are also placed under unique obligations. There is usually a public oath of allegiance administered to naturalized citizens, but the same oath-covenant is representatively binding on all citizens. They may be required to take a public oath at certain times, such as when people join the armed forces or when they are elected to public office, but the terms of the civil covenant (e.g., a constitution) are still binding on them, whether or not they verbally and publicly profess allegiance to it.

In the family covenant, the definitive covenantal act takes place when the officer of either church or state declares a couple legally married.[23] Family allegiance by children to parents takes place *representatively and definitively* at conception. God deals providentially with individuals before their birth: Paul wrote: "And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac; (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated" (Rom. 9:10–13). This is why parents become legally responsible for the protection of their children at conception, not at birth.[24]

2. Progressive Allegiance

Covenantal allegiance is also progressive in church and state: covenant renewal continues as time passes. *First*, in the church: the

23. In Western law, a single act of sexual bonding—consummation—must subsequently affirm the public declaration of marriage in order for the marriage to be legally binding.

24. This makes abortion an act of covenant-breaking: rebellion upward against God and downward against the murdered infant. God holds the parents responsible, and also their medical accomplices. If the mother has the abortion against the father's wishes, then God holds her, the physician, and his assistants responsible. This is why abortion, being murder, is a capital crime in God's eyes. Any society that refuses to legislate and enforce capital punishment against every convicted abortionist and every convicted ex-mother will eventually fall under God's negative corporate sanctions. Because most Christians who are anti-abortionists today are also theological pietists, they refuse to call for the execution of convicted abortionists, let alone the murderous parents. By rejecting God's law and its required civil sanctions, they have renounced the prophetic function. They have therefore reduced themselves to the status of just one more special interest political pressure group, where fund-raising and political coalitions with covenant-breakers count for more than integrity before God. Their intense hatred of biblical law makes them lovers of political compromise. They write "Abortion is Murder" on posters, but they do not really believe it, for they do not affirm the Bible's civil penalty for murder. They have sent misleading signals to the abortionists and to the civil authorities. God is not mocked. Judgment is coming.

Mosaic Covenant's mandatory acts of ecclesiastical covenant renewal were Israel's annual assemblies—above all, participation in the Passover meal. In the church, taking Holy Communion is the act of formal covenant renewal. This publicly places the church member under the sanctions of the covenant, which is why Paul warned members of the church at Corinth that they must examine themselves—exercise self-judgment—prior to taking the communion meal (I Cor. 11:28).

Second, in the state: various acts of citizenship mark state covenant renewal, most notably the act of voting. Under Mosaic law, the public assembled to ratify the anointing of a new king (I Kings 1:39–40; II Chron. 23). In short, individuals in their legal office as citizens *ratify* or *sanction* a leader or group of leaders. The civil covenant extends through history by means of these public acts of re-ratification. Citizens reaffirm their allegiance to the original civil covenant by formally sanctioning their leaders from time to time.[25] In many countries today, the adult male citizen's appearance in response to military conscription constitutes covenant renewal.[26]

In contrast to church and state, there is no biblically sanctioned judicial act of covenant renewal for the family; only death, either covenantal or physical, breaks the marital bond.[27] Covenant renewal within the family is exclusively moral rather than judicial.[28] This is an important distinguishing feature of the family covenant from both church and state covenants. It points to different structures of authority, as we shall see.[29]

25. In many modern tyrannies, it is legally mandatory for citizens to vote. Negative sanctions are imposed on those who refuse. The tyrants know that the national covenant needs periodic ratification by the people. These public acts of ratification create temporary legitimacy for the rulers; they reinforce the obligation of the people to obey.

26. This may appear to have been the case in ancient Israel (Ex. 30:13–14). It was not, however. This census-taking was allowed only in preparation for holy war. The adult males had to pay blood money to the priests. See Gary North, *Authority and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Exodus* (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, 2012), Part 3, *Tools of Dominion* (1990), ch. 58. Thus, it appears that this was not an act of civil covenant renewal but rather priestly renewal.

27. Ray R. Sutton, *Second Chance: Biblical Blueprints for Divorce and Remarriage* (Ft. Worth: Dominion Press, 1987), chaps. 2, 4.

28. There is no judicial equivalent of Holy Communion for the family. This is why any attempt to equate the legal status of the family with the legal status of the church is mistaken. They are separate jurisdictions, covenants, and institutions. Gary North, *Tithing and the Church* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1994), chaps. 1, 6. See also Appendix B, below: "Rushdoony on the Tithe: A Critique."

29. It is nothing short of heresy to equate the family with the institutional church. They are separate jurisdictions, separate covenants. The church does not develop from the family. The church survives the final judgment; the family does not: no marriage or giving of marriage (Matt. 22:30). The church is therefore the central institution in

E. Responsibility: Collective and Hierarchical

The biblical doctrine of collective responsibility is an aspect of the biblical doctrine of hierarchical responsibility. We need to ask: In what way?

We know that God brought judgments against nations under the Old Covenant; the testimony of the prophets is clear about this.[30] He also showed mercy to Nineveh because the entire city repented when Jonah preached. This raises an important question: Did God ever punish a collective group solely because of the sins of the group's rulers? The plagues of Egypt indicate that God did do this. The rigorous theocratic bureaucracy of Egypt brought the entire nation under the wrath of God. But at least with respect to the tenth plague, the death of the firstborn, God offered a way of escape to every Egyptian household: blood on the doorposts. That no Egyptian household took this path to life (Ex. 12:30) indicates that they all agreed with their supposedly divine political ruler. They did consent in principle to what the Pharaoh was doing.

There is another issue that we need to consider: *limiting the state*. Consider the biblical law governing the state's imposition of the capital sanction: "The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin" (Deut. 24:16). This is a restriction on civil government. Were there any exceptions to this under the Mosaic Covenant? Yes: the military action known as *hormah*—the destruction of an especially evil enemy society during wartime. Hormah was the representative example, and named accordingly: a place set aside by God for total destruction.

> And Israel vowed a vow unto the LORD, and said, If thou wilt indeed deliver this people into my hand, then I will utterly destroy their cities. And the LORD hearkened to the voice of Israel, and delivered up the Canaanites; and they utterly destroyed them and their cities: and he called the name of the place Hormah[31] (Num. 21:2–3).

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a covenant-keeping society, not the family. Any attempt to fuse the two institutions by viewing the church as an aspect of the family is at bottom a return to clannism. Jesus warned about elevating the family above the church: "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me" (Matt. 10:34–38).

30. I am not yet raising the question of New Covenant history.

31. There was a second Canaanitic Hormah in Zerephath, the one destroyed by Judah

1. A Priestly Army

James Jordan concluded that this activity of total destruction was "a priestly act, issuing from the flaming swords of the cherubic (priestly) guardians of the land, a revelation of God's direct fiery judgment against the wicked. Not every city was to be destroyed in this fashion, but certain ones were, as types of the wrath of God."[32]

Speaking of the city of Bashan, Moses said: "And we utterly destroyed them, as we did unto Sihon king of Heshbon, utterly destroying the men, women, and children, of every city" (Deut. 3:6). The same curse of death was placed on Jericho and on anyone who would rebuild its walls: "And Joshua adjured them at that time, saying, Cursed be the man before the LORD, that riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho: he shall lay the foundation thereof in his firstborn, and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it" (Josh. 6:26)—a prophecy fulfilled by Hiel: "In his days did Hiel the Beth-elite build Jericho: he laid the foundation thereof in Abiram his firstborn, and set up the gates thereof in his youngest son Segub, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by Joshua the son of Nun" (I Kings 16:34).[33] While this was not the normal rule of warfare (Deut. 20:14), it did apply in certain cases. The children of the enemy perished with their parents.

Israel became God's sanctioning agent against societies that had corrupted worship and morality. Israel in a sense became the military equivalent of the angel of death. When assembled for battle, they became a holy army engaged in holy warfare, meaning a war to impose God's negative sanctions in history.[34] So outraged was God against

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and Simeon (Jud. 1:17). The Hebrew root word for Hormah (*charam*) meant a thing dedicated—set aside—by God for total destruction: "Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary," James Strong, *Exhaustive Concordance*, p. 43, #2767, #2763; *Smith's Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. H. B. Hackett, 4 vols. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker, [1869] 1981), II, p. 1089. Wrote Jordan: "*Hormah* means 'placed under the ban, totally destroyed.' To be placed under the ban is to be devoted to death." James B. Jordan, *Judges: God's War Against Humanism* (Tyler, Texas: Geneva Ministries, 1985), p. 10.

32. Jordan, *Judges*, p. 11.

33. Presumably, this meant that the walls of the city had not been rebuilt. The city was apparently occupied in David's day: "When they told it unto David, he sent to meet them, because the men were greatly ashamed: and the king said, Tarry at Jericho until your beards be grown, and then return" (II Sam. 10:5). Perhaps this was a name given to the immediate vicinity of Jericho, but not to an actual city.

34. On Israel as a holy army, see *Judges*, p. 93. Jordan pointed out that Deborah's (and Barak's) song includes a verse (Jud. 5:2) that refers to the fact that "long locks of hair hung loose in Israel," a reference to one aspect of the Nazarite vow (Num. 6:5). He is using the alternative (margin) translation of the New American Standard Bible.

the Canaanites that He hardened their hearts, just as He had hardened Pharaoh's heart against doing good,[35] so that they would not seek peace with Israel. He wanted to judge them.[36]

> Joshua made war a long time with all those kings. There was not a city that made peace with the children of Israel, save the Hivites the inhabitants of Gibeon: all other they took in battle. For it was of the LORD to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle, that he might destroy them utterly, and that they might have no favour, but that he might destroy them, as the LORD commanded Moses (Josh. 11:18–20).

2. A Judicial Restraint on Civil Government

We return to Deuteronomy 24:16: "The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin." This law was judicially binding within the land of Israel. Yet we know that in the case of Leviticus 4, the sin of the priest could bring God's sanctions against the whole people. Does this mean that the judicial restraint of Deuteronomy 24:16 applies to the civil government but not to God? I think this is the proper explanation.

Why does God refuse to bind Himself in history by this same judicial principle? Why does He reserve the right to enforce collective judgment against the publicly non-participating sons of law-breaking priests? *First*, because of the doctrine of original sin: in His eyes, all men stand judicially condemned from conception forward. Only His special grace saves some people from eternal wrath. Thus, what protects mankind in general from God's wrath in history is His grace, i.e., His merciful self-restraint. This common grace is manifested by God in His extension of physical life to men in history.[37] He there-

35. "And he hardened Pharaoh's heart, that he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said" (Ex. 7:13). "And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh, and he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had spoken unto Moses" (Ex. 9:12). "And the LORD said unto Moses, Go in unto Pharaoh: for I have hardened his heart, and the heart of his servants, that I might shew these my signs before him" (Ex. 10:1) "But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, so that he would not let the children of Israel go" (Ex. 10:20). "And Moses and Aaron did all these wonders before Pharaoh: and the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, so that he would not let the children of Israel go out of his land" (Ex. 11:10).

36. Jesus said that God deliberately hardens people's hearts so that they will not believe on Him and be saved: "He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them" (John 12:40).

37. Gary North, *Dominion and Common Grace: The Biblical Basis of Progress* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1987).

fore distinguishes between judicial guilt in His eyes and judicial guilt in the eyes of sinful civil rulers. As a testimony to God's common grace to all men, and also as a testimony to their own guiltiness before God, sinful rulers are to be restrained from executing civil judgment against those who are judicially innocent of public crimes. God, however, is not under a similar judicial restraint. *Second*, God knows that the sins of the civil and ecclesiastical rulers reflect the preferences of the people. In this sense, all citizens stand condemned, at least with respect to their private thoughts and acts. Public toleration of the rulers' particular sins is the result of the people's willingness to tolerate sin in the camp, in order to avoid similar public sanctions against their own sins. In short, they are not judicially innocent in God's eyes. He knows their hearts. *Third*, sinful civil magistrates need judicial restraints if righteousness, peace, and freedom are to be protected; God does not need similar restraints.

It is not that sons do not die for the sins of their fathers; they do. We all do. The doctrine of original sin teaches that all people die because of the representative sin of their father, Adam. Romans 5:14 declares: "Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come." Biblical law teaches only that the state is not to execute sons for the sins of their fathers. Yet, even in this case, there was an exception in ancient Israel: sacrilege.[38]

F. Ritual Cleansings

Was the sin of Leviticus 4 unintentional sacrilege? This does not appear to be the case, for it is difficult to imagine what unintentional sacrilege might be. Sacrilege is *the* crime in history; those who commit it do so with a high hand against God. Adam sinned wilfully (I Tim. 2:14). So did the people who told Aaron to build the golden calf (Ex. 32). So did Saul when he sacrificed the animal in Samuel's absence (I Sam. 13:9). So did Uzziah when he entered the temple to burn incense (II Chron. 26:19).

The atoning ritual requirements for the priest were specific: a bullock (young bull)[39] had to be slain and its blood used to wipe away the sin.

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38. Appendix A: "Sacrilege and Sanctions."

39. A young bull is not vicious. Its temperament is still sweet. Its character changes when it becomes mature. See James B. Jordan, *The Law of the Covenant: An Exposition of Exodus 21–23* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1984), p. 122.

> And he shall bring the bullock unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD; and shall lay his hand upon the bullock's head, and kill the bullock before the LORD. And the priest that is anointed shall take of the bullock's blood, and bring it to the tabernacle of the congregation: And the priest shall dip his finger in the blood, and sprinkle of the blood seven times before the LORD, before the veil of the sanctuary. And the priest shall put some of the blood upon the horns of the altar of sweet incense before the LORD, which is in the tabernacle of the congregation; and shall pour all the blood of the bullock at the bottom of the altar of the burnt offering, which is at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And he shall take off from it all the fat of the bullock for the sin offering; the fat that covereth the inwards, and all the fat that is upon the inwards (Lev. 4:4–8).

The atoning ritual requirements of the congregation were similar, and the sacrificial animal was the same.

> And if the **whole congregation** [Hebrew word: *'edah*] of Israel sin through ignorance, and the thing be hid from the eyes of the **assembly** [Hebrew word: *qahal*], and they have done somewhat against any of the commandments of the LORD concerning things which should not be done, and are guilty; When the sin, which they have sinned against it, is known, then the **congregation** [assembly—Hebrew word: *qahal*] shall offer a young bullock for the sin, and bring him before the tabernacle of the congregation. And the elders of the congregation shall lay their hands upon the head of the bullock before the LORD: and the bullock shall be killed before the LORD. And the priest that is anointed shall bring of the bullock's blood to the tabernacle of the congregation: And the priest shall dip his finger in some of the blood, and sprinkle it seven times before the LORD, even before the veil. And he shall put some of the blood upon the horns of the altar which is before the LORD, that is in the tabernacle of the congregation, and shall pour out all the blood at the bottom of the altar of the burnt offering, which is at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And he shall take all his fat from him, and burn it upon the altar. **And he shall do with the bullock as he did with the bullock for a sin offering, so shall he do with this**: and the priest shall make an atonement for them, and it shall be forgiven them. And he shall carry forth the bullock without the camp, and burn him as he burned the first bullock: it is a sin offering for the congregation (Lev. 4:13–21).

1. Congregation and Assembly

The question arises: What was the "whole congregation," and what was "the assembly"? Here, Gordon Wenham and James Jordan disagreed on the definitions. Wenham argued that the congregation was a smaller body within the worshipping assembly. This smaller group possessed representational and legal functions. Thus, when the con-

gregation had committed an unintentional sin, and the leaders of the assembly later learned of this, the assembly brought the bullocks an offering.[40] If this thesis is correct, then there was an added degree of hierarchy in the relationship: priest, congregation, assembly. The assembly, the larger body, brought the offering for the sake of its representative body. Jordan saw it the other way around: the congregation [*'edah*] was the nation as such; the assembly [*qahal*] was the formal gathering.[41] He saw this gathering as primarily sabbatical.[42] I think he made the stronger case. On this point, he agreed with Rushdoony's conclusion: "*Congregation* has reference to the whole nation in its governmental function as God's covenant people. G. Ernest Wright defined it as 'the whole organized commonwealth as it assembled officially for various purposes, particularly worship.'"[43]

In either case, *there was a unique covenantal link between the priest and the people*, a link identified by the identical nature of the appropriate atoning sacrifices: a bullock. This covenantal link was judicially grounded in the designation of Israel as a kingdom of priests (Ex. 19:6). The high priest was a priest to the other priests; they in turn were priests to the priestly nation of Israel; and the nation of Israel served as priests for the entire pagan world.[44] Thus, as Milgrom said, "The high priest assumes responsibility for all Israel."[45]

2. Civil and Ecclesiastical Representation

In contrast to the priest, who had to sacrifice a bullock, the tribal leader[46] who sinned unintentionally had to bring a male goat without defect for his offering (Lev. 4:23). The common man who sinned unintentionally had to bring a female goat without defect (Lev. 4:28). He could also bring a female lamb without defect (Lev. 4:32). The symbolism is obvious: *masculinity under the Mosaic Covenant was associated in the civil covenant with rulership, femininity with subordination*.[47] In

40. Wenham, *Leviticus*, pp. 98–99.

41. James B. Jordan, *The Sociology of the Church* (Tyler, Texas: Geneva Ministries, 1986), Appendix A.

42. *Ibid.*, p. 298.

43. R. J. Rushdoony, *The Institutes of Biblical Law* (Nutley, New Jersey: Craig Press, 1973), p. 85. Wright's statement appears in *The Interpreter's Bible*, II, p. 468.

44. This is why 70 bullocks had to be sacrificed each year at the feast of ingathering (booths or tabernacles) during the first eight days (Num. 29:13–36). These were representative atoning sacrifices for the whole gentile world, symbolized by the 70 nations. Jordan, *Law of the Covenant*, p. 190.

45. Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, p. 54.

46. Wenham, *Leviticus*, p. 99.

47. The abolition of all required ritual sacrifices in the New Covenant (Heb. 9) has

neither case—civil ruler or citizen—was a bullock an appropriate sacrificial animal, for the bullock was associated with priestly authority.

The sin of the priest and the sin of the whole congregation were of similar consequence in God's eyes: major (bullock). Likewise, the sins of the ruler and the lone individual were comparable: minor (goat). The sacrificial link between priest and people indicates that the priest had sufficient representative authority for his unintentional sin to bring the people under God's negative sanctions. The civil ruler did not possess comparable representative authority.

What is indicated in Leviticus 4:1–3 is that *there was a much closer judicial link between the priesthood and the covenanted society than there was between the civil ruler and the covenanted society*. This is why we must conclude that *the church was covenantally more important in Israel than the state was*. The unintentional sin of the priest was treated by God as comparable to the unintentional sin of the whole congregation. The unintentional sin of the ruler was treated on a par with the unintentional sin of the average citizen.[48] Conclusion: the laxity of the priesthood regarding their personal sins threatened greater direct negative consequences for the citizens of Mosaic Covenant Israel than the moral or judicial laxity of the civil authorities.[49]

G. Corporate Sanctions and Authority: The People

This raises the question of the *locus of authority* for the initiation of corporate sins. Temporally and functionally, this infraction was initiated by the priests, who were in repeated contact with the holy implements of the tabernacle-temple. But the corporate nature of God's negative sanctions indicates that primary institutional responsibility lay elsewhere. The priests were legal representatives placed by God between Himself and His people. As representatives, they did in fact *represent*. A representative, judicially speaking, is legally the initiating agent, but his acts must be sanctioned by those represented. His ac-

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removed the male-female distinction in the civil covenant. Without civil sacrifices, there is no legitimate judicial restriction on women participating in civil rulership. The male-female distinction is maintained in matters of the church's ordained elders only because a male must represent a male God in the administration of the sacraments and the covenantally authoritative declaration of God's word (I Cor. 14:34–35). This exclusion of females has nothing to do with sacrifices.

48. Economically speaking, the king's sacrifice was less burdensome than the commoner's, for a female goat can produce offspring and milk. The male animal was symbolically more important in the ancient world, but not economically.

49. Cf. Jordan, *Judges*, on Judges 17–21.

tions are to reflect the wishes of those whom he represents.[50] *Their continuing consent is the basis of his authority*. Thus, the priest was required by God to offer a sacrifice because of this representative infraction that he unknowingly had initiated.

The representative represents both God and society. If society does not bring negative sanctions against evil covenantal representatives, then God will. *God delegates authority to the people to serve as His covenantally sovereign agents, meaning those who bring lawful sanctions in His name*. If the people refuse to act as God's representatives, then He acts on His own behalf against both the rulers and the people. This covenantal threat is to serve as their motivation for imposing positive and negative sanctions against their rulers. This is the theological foundation of what has become known in Protestant political theory as the doctrine of interposition.[51]

We see an example of this when Saul announced sanctions against his son Jonathan. The people intervened to prevent him from carrying them out. "And the people said unto Saul, Shall Jonathan die, who hath wrought this great salvation in Israel? God forbid: as the Lord liveth, there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground; for he hath wrought with God this day. So the people rescued Jonathan, that he died not" (I Sam. 14:45). The word translated as "people" refers to a collective unit, such as a tribe. The army was in battle. This was not mob action; it was organized with the cooperation of the military commanders. They *interposed* themselves between Saul and Jonathan. The biblical text is clear: they *rescued* him.[52]

Was this an act of rebellion? No, it was an act *against* rebellion. Saul was the rebel; the people interposed themselves in order to prevent an unrighteous act on the part of the king, their representative. It was the people who had called for a king (I Sam. 8); it was they who could lawfully interpose themselves between the king and his victim. On this occasion, Saul heeded their judgment.

50. This is not true, short-term, in tyrannies, but tyrannies do not indefinitely survive a change in heart in their subjects.

51. On this political-judicial concept in Western history, see John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (1559), IV:XX:XXXI. Cf. Michael Gilstrap, "John Calvin's Theology of Resistance," *Christianity and Civilization*, No. 2 (1983), pp. 180–217; Tom Rose, "On Reconstruction and the American Republic," *ibid*., pp. 285–310.

52. If there is an example in the Bible of the lawful rescue by citizens of an innocent person from the unlawful act of a senior civil magistrate, this is it. Such organized resistance must have the blessing of church officers or local magistrates; otherwise, it would not be biblically lawful. But with that support, people have a right to challenge even a king who is about to execute his child. See North, *When Justice Is Aborted*.

The fact is, kingship in Israel was a product of the people's lawfully delegated authority under God. John Frame wrote: "The kingship comes as God's response to a demand from the people. The people's motives in making their request were largely sinful (I Sam 8; cf. Deut 17:14; Judges 9), but God had planned to raise up kings for his people (Deut 17:14–20) and had given them in the law a proper method of choosing one. It is important to note that in Deuteronomy 17, the king is to be chosen by the people (v 15). As with the appointment of Moses and that of at least some of the judges, there is a human choice to be made. This choice certainly does not prevent God from playing a direct role in the selection process, but it does necessitate a human choice in addition to whatever role God may himself choose to play."[53] Again, "The kingship is both a charismatic office and a popular one: that is, both God and the people play roles in its establishment and continuance."[54] The people have the legal authority to reject the leadership of a king (Rehoboam) "who will not rule according to their desires."[55] This places enormous authority into the

53. John Frame, "Toward a Theology of the State," *Westminster Theological Journal*, LI (Fall 1989), p. 211.

54. *Ibid*., p. 212.

55. *Idem*. A similar view of the sovereignty of the people under God appeared in the *Vindiciae Contra Tyrannos*, published in Latin anonymously in 1579, which became a touchstone for Protestant political theory almost from the day it first appeared. It was *the* Huguenot tract of that century, published seven years after the St. Bartholomew's massacre of the Protestants by the French monarch. These ideas had been discussed before the massacre, but this book put them in final form. The book asserted the duty of the people to rise up and overthrow a king who was flagrantly disobeying God.

These ideas on the right of rebellion can be traced back to the School of Salamanca, the sixteenth-century political economists who are without doubt the most important neglected political theorists in the post-medieval West: free market economists, subjective value theorists, and defenders of republican liberties. Samuel Rutherford cited Luis de Molina, Francisco Suarez, and Fernando Vasquez in four of the first seven footnotes in *Lex, Rex, or the Law and the Prince* (Harrisonburg, Virginia: Sprinkle, [1644] 1980), pp. 1, 2. He cited Francisco de Vitoria (he referred to him as Victoria) and Domingo de Soto on page 3. On their economic theories, see Marjorie Grice-Hutchison, *The School of Salamanca: Readings in Spanish Monetary Theory, 1544–1605* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952); Murray N. Rothbard, "Late Medieval Origins of Free Market Economic Thought," *Journal of Christian Reconstruction*, II (Summer 1975); Rothbard, *Economic Thought Before Adam Smith* (Brookfield, Vermont: Edward Elgar, 1995), ch. 4; Alejandro Antonio Chafuen, *Christians for Freedom: Late-Scholastic Economics* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1986). Chafuen preferred to call them Hispanic Scholastics (p. 23). There is very little historical scholarship in English that traces the origins of republican political theory to the School of Salamanca; the relationship is better known in European scholarship, especially German. See Bernice Hamilton, *Political Thought in Sixteenth-Century Spain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963). Quentin Skinner devoted a chapter to them in *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), II, ch. 5: "The Revival of Thomism." Their

hands of the ruled. Here is the judicial basis of Israel's existence as a theocratic republic, despite the presence of kings, beginning during Samuel's prophetic ministry.

H. The Priestly Office

It is clear from Leviticus 4 and from many other texts in the Bible that those who are at greatest risk of the imposition of God's negative covenantal sanctions in history are those who are the primary sanctioning agents of the specific covenant: the people rather than their covenantal representatives. We discover in this principle a fundamental rule of all biblical social authority: *those who are threatened as the primary recipients of God's national covenantal sanctions are the society's primary sovereign agents*. From him to whom much is given, much is expected (Luke 12:48).[56] Again and again in the Old Testament, God's capital sanctions fell on the people rather than the kings and the priests.[57] This indicates that *it was the people who possessed primary institutional authority, not their representatives*. This is why Israel was a theocratic republic. The Bible's **holy commonwealth ideal** necessarily involves the establishment of an **oath-bound civil covenant**. In this ideal civil covenant, the corporate people possess primary responsibility and therefore primary authority. In this sense, *the republican ideal is biblical*. Authority extends downward from God to the people and upward from them to their representatives. *God validates civil rulers in the name of the people*.

Modern democratic theory (popular sovereignty) is a secularization of this biblical holy covenant ideal (delegated sovereignty), in which the people exercised judicial authority under God because of the covenant they had made with God. The evils of democracy, familiar from Aristotle's era to today, are no worse than the evils of any other political system. The evils stem from an attempted divinization of the state, not from democracy as a political arrangement. Whenever the political order is viewed as beyond earthly appeal—**the divine right of politics**—politics will become progressively tyrannical, no matter which authority structure the state adopts: oligarchic, democratic, bureaucratic, or monarchical (today a defunct ideal).

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work was a great deal more than just the revival of Thomism. It reshaped political theory in the Protestant West.

56. Gary North, *Treasure and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Luke*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2000] 2012), ch. 28.

57. The Levites killed 3,000 after the golden calf incident (Ex. 32:28). Aaron was not executed. Numbers 25:8 records the death of 24,000 by plague. In II Samuel 24:15, we read of 70,000 who died in a plague.

The priest had to sacrifice a young bullock in order to turn back the negative sanctions of God against those who were under the priest's authority. These sanctions threatened not only the priest; they threatened that segment of the covenanted community under his lawful jurisdiction. The atoning sacrifice had to take place at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. "And he shall bring the bullock unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD; and shall lay his hand upon the bullock's head, and kill the bullock before the LORD" (Lev. 4:4). The very place of sacrifice is designated by God as the *congregation's tabernacle*, i.e., a dwelling place. This was the place where God met the congregation. "This shall be a continual burnt offering throughout your generations at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD: where I will meet you, to speak there unto thee" (Ex. 29:42). This was the dwelling place of God, but it was also the dwelling place of the congregation. Although the people were not allowed bodily into the presence of God, the furniture of the tabernacle symbolically represented them. *The tabernacle was the place where the **dual citizenship**—heaven and earth—of both man and God was publicly revealed.* Covenant-keepers in history are not citizens merely of earth (Phil. 3:20), and God in history is King not merely in heaven. The whole creation is His kingdom, and to prove this, He brings His sanctions in history, both directly and representatively.[58]

58. The most obvious theological link joining premillennialism with amillennialism is their joint denial of God's visible, earthly, sanctions-bringing kingdom in history prior to the second coming of Christ. In both systems, Jesus Christ must be bodily present in order for Him to impose public sanctions. In short, pessimillennialism insists there are no representative civil sanctions in the New Covenant era. Pessimillennialism argues that prior to Jesus' bodily appearance in judgment, His kingdom is sharply circumscribed to: (1) redeemed hearts, (2) orthodox churches, and (3) families in which at least one of the parents is a Christian. See Gary North, *Millennialism and Social Theory* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1990), chaps. 7, 8. Given this view of God's historic sanctions, the state is understood as lawfully imposing only humanist or pagan sanctions in history. In fact, many of these theologians insist, God intends that the state *should* impose sanctions based exclusively on humanist ("neutral") civil law; it would be morally wrong for the civil magistrate to enforce Bible-revealed law. Cf. Norman L. Geisler, "A Premillennial View of Law and Government," *The Best in Theology*, ed. J. I. Packer (Carol Stream, Illinois: Christianity Today/Word, 1986), vol. I. Politics must therefore be pluralist rather than Christian: Mark A. Noll, Nathan O. Hatch, and George M. Marsden, *The Search for Christian America* (Westchester, Illinois: Crossway, 1983), p. 134; cf. essays by Gary Scott Smith, Paul G. Schrotenboer, Gordon J. Spykman, and James W. Skillen, in Gary Scott Smith (ed.), *God and Politics: Four Views on the Reformation of Civil Government* (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1989). For a refutation of this view of God's kingdom in history, see Greg L. Bahnsen, "This World and the Kingdom of God," in Gary DeMar and Peter J.

Sacrilege is the theft of God's property. Adam's sin involved such theft. This sin is essentially priestly: *a sacramental boundary violation*. Adam's priestly sin extended downward to his heirs, bringing death. In a similar sense judicially, a priest under the Mosaic Covenant possessed delegated authority, thereby enabling him to place the covenanted community under God's condemnation. An unintentional sin committed by a priest was a greater threat than an unintentional sin committed by the king. Conclusion: *the judicial link between a priest and the people was more binding covenantally in Israel than the link between the king and the people*.

This is evidence that the church is more fundamental than the state in the political economy of the Bible. *The church is central to society: not the state and not the family*.[59] The family and the state have been more universal in time and place; neither has been central in history. It is the ancient error of natural law theory that has led pagan and Christian social theorists to assume that the *geographical universality* of family and state implies the *social centrality* of one or the other. On the contrary, the formal preaching of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments—inclusion and exclusion—are central in history because they are central in eternity. (Note: the word *sacrament* is derived from the Latin word *sacramentum*, a military oath of enlistment.[60] Sacraments are an aspect of point four of the biblical covenant model: oath-sanctions.[61]) This does not imply that the institutional church is at the top of a single institutional hierarchy in society; no such single hierarchy exists. It *does* imply the institutional church is the most important institution in history, for the Bible calls it called the Bride of Christ. The Christian family and the Christian state are not so designated.

The atoning sacrificial bullock of both priest and congregation had to be slain *at* the door of the congregation, i.e., next to the altar

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Leithart, *The Reduction of Christianity: A Biblical Response to Dave Hunt* (Ft. Worth, Texas: Dominion Press, 1988), Appendix D. For a refutation of this view of politics, see Gary North, *Political Polytheism: The Myth of Pluralism* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1989).

59. The church perseveres institutionally in the resurrected world beyond the final judgment (Rev. 21, 22). The family surely does not: "For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven" (Matt. 22:30). The state apparently does not, since its judicial function is to bring negative sanctions against public evil. Public evil will end at the final judgment.

60. ."Sacrament," in *Cyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*, eds. John M'Clintock and James Strong, 12 volumes (New York: Harper & Bros., 1894), IX, p. 212.

61. Sutton, *That You May Prosper*, ch. 4.

itself, on the north side. It was not slain on the altar. It had to be dead before it was placed on the altar. *The altar was the symbolic door to heaven*. This door marked a fundamental boundary in Israel. To contain God's wrath and keep it from flowing from the holy of holies through the tabernacle's door to the people, the priest had to make atonement for his sin at the door of the tabernacle. Conversely, in order for the sin of the people to be contained outside the tabernacle, so that it would not invade the holy of holies, thereby forcing God to depart from the dwelling place,[62] the priest had to make an identical sacrifice for the congregation at the door of the tabernacle. The blood of the bullock was representational in both cases. It defended the integrity of the boundary between God and His people.

I. The Priestly Function

Church officers lawfully control access to the public signs of eternal life: the sacraments.[63] The three priestly functions are these: (1) the formal, weekly, public proclamation of the message of eternal life;

62. Wenham wrote: "Lev. 4 makes explicit that sin defiles the sanctuary: it makes it impossible for God to dwell among his people." Wenham, *Leviticus*, p. 102. James Jordan calls attention to Ezekiel 8–11 as an example when God departed from the temple because of the people's abominable sacrifices. "The Jews had treated the Temple and the Ark as idols, and so God would destroy them, as He had the golden calf. Ezekiel sees God pack up and move out of the Temple, leaving it empty or 'desolate.' The abominations have caused the Temple to become desolate. Once God had left, the armies of Nebuchadnezzar swept in and destroyed the empty Temple." James B. Jordan, "The Abomination of Desolation: An Alternative Hypothesis," in Gary DeMar, *The Debate Over Christian Reconstruction* (Ft. Worth, Texas: Dominion Press, 1988), p. 240.

63. Therefore, any attempt by the civil authorities to interfere with public excommunications is a form of sacrilege. This is not to say that a person who is slandered by a church official should not have legal recourse in a civil court, but in a biblical social order, the church itself could not lawfully be sued; only the officer could be sued, and only as a private individual. This immunity from suits by its own members and ex-members is a manifestation of church sovereignty. To allow the state to prosecute the church would be to place the church under the general sovereignty of the state.

A similar immunity from suits is implicitly granted by the United States Constitution to the Federal government. The Federal government may not be sued except by its own permission. Wrote the Library of Congress' Congressional Research Office: "*Immunity of the United States From Suit*.—In pursuance of the general rule that a sovereign cannot be sued in his own courts, it follows that the judicial power does not extend to suits against the United States unless Congress by general or special enactment consents to suits against the Government. This rule first emanated in embryo form in an *obiter dictum* by Chief Justice Jay in *Chisolm v. Georgia*, where he indicated that a suit would not lie against the United States because 'there is no power which the courts can call to their aid.'" *The Constitution of The United States of America: Analysis and Interpretation* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1972), p. 716.

(2) the administration of the institutional monopoly of the sacraments; and (3) the imposition of church discipline, with the authority to deny a person access to the sacraments as its ultimate negative sanction. All three are *representative* judicial acts. What is formally announced by the church on earth, Jesus said, should be assumed by men to be judicially binding in heaven. "Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matt.18:18). The institutional church's power of excommunication is declarative—as declarative as baptism and the Lord's Supper are.[64] That is, *formal excommunication represents God in history*. This was Calvin's view of church authority; it was not some peculiar invention of Roman Catholicism.[65]

This view of church discipline is denied by those who adopt a nominalist definition of the Lord's Supper: a *memorial* rather than a judicially binding declaration in God's name that the participants are allowed in God's holy, *judicial* presence. This memorial view of the Lord's Supper leads to the transfer of primary social sovereignty either to the family or the state. It reduces excommunication to the status of a mere memorial—a sanction without much judicial clout.

The difference between the authority of a cleric and the authority of the head of a non-covenantal organization can be seen in the differing methods of financing. The income of non-covenantal institutions is not mandated by God's law. The income of the church is: the tithe.[66] This difference in financing is based on the presence of the sacraments in the church. The cleric represents—mediates judicially—God and His people. He administers the sacraments in an organization

64. Sutton, *That You May Prosper*, p. 163.

65. Here is Calvin's view of church discipline: ". . . Whoever, after committing a crime, humbly confesses his fault, and entreats *the Church* to forgive him, is absolved not only by men, but by God himself; and, on the other hand, whoever treats with ridicule the reproofs and threatening of *the Church*, if he is condemned by her, the decision which men have given will be ratified in heaven." John Calvin, *Commentary on a Harmony of the Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, and Luke*, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker, [1558] 1979), II, p. 358 (Matthew 18:18). Calvin argued that the fear of God must be added to the fear of church discipline in order to terrify "obstinate and haughty men [who] are strongly inclined to despise the decision of the Church on this pretence, that they refuse to be subject to men—as wicked profligates often make bold appeals to the heavenly tribunal. . . ." Therefore, "Christ, in order to subdue this obstinacy by terror, threatens that the condemnation, which is now despised by them, will be ratified in heaven." *Ibid.*, II, p. 359.

66. Gary North, *The Covenantal Tithe* (Powder Springs, Georgia: American Vision, 2011).

that possesses the God-given authority to compel its *voting* members to tithe.[67] The fact that modern churches are antinomian and pay no attention to the judicial theology that undergirds the tithe does not disprove the theology. It merely starves these churches financially.[68]

The specified financial support of the priest in Israel was the tithe. The people tithed a tenth of their *net increase*[69] to the Levites; the Levites in turn tithed a tenth of their increase to the Aaronic priests (Num. 18:21–27). The Levites were entitled to the tithe because the people were not allowed to come near the tabernacle of meeting where the Levites labored (Num. 18:21–22). The existence of this temple boundary separated the Levites from any inheritance in rural land (v. 24).[70] Presumably, this same principle of *sacramental separation* governed the Levites' tithe to the priests. The even more rigorous barrier in between the two areas of sacramental service—the tabernacle of meeting vs. the holy of holies—was the basis of the Levites' mandatory tithe to the priests. The Levites could legally not draw near to the holy of holies; they were required to tithe to those who could. The tithe is therefore grounded in a judicial principle: *representation before the heavenly throne of God*.

The tithe also proclaims an economic principle. The economic principle of the tithe is simple to state and readily understood: *eternal life and access to the sacraments are not to be offered for sale to the highest bidder*. Neither are church offices.[71] The monopoly position of the church with respect to the sacraments is manifested by the legitimate monopoly claim of the church to 10% of the net increase that God grants to individual church members. The judicial principle of the tithe is less readily understood: *the existence of sacramental boundaries*. The first boundary separates church members from non-members: only the former have lawful access to the sacraments. The second boundary separates the officers who administer the sacraments from

67. Non-voting members should not be compelled to tithe. To compel them to tithe as a condition of receiving the sacraments would be equivalent to selling the sacraments.

68. North, *Covenantal Tithe*, ch. 5.

69. God does not normally tax capital (property). He taxes income. Rushdoony, *Institutes*, pp. 56–57. For a list of the handful of Mosaic exceptions, see chapter 5:B.

70. There were two rare exceptions (Lev. 27:20–21). See chapter 36.

71. Simon the magician tried to purchase the Apostles' ability to lay hands on people so that they could receive the Holy Spirit. Peter condemned him: "But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money" (Acts 8:20). The term "simony" is applied to someone who buys a church office for money in order to lay legal claim on future income from tithes and offerings. Gary North, *Sacrifice and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Acts*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2000] 2012), ch. 6.

unordained members. The mandatory tithe identifies the church as possessing a unique covenantal monopoly.[72] This is as true under the New Covenant as it was under the Old Covenant.

God's grant of *monopoly sacramental authority* to His church places the cleric in a special intermediary position in between God and men. The sacraments are a means of bringing God's judgment into the midst of the assembly. The *saints* are *sanctified*—set apart judicially—and therefore they are subject to the ecclesiastical *sanctions*. The Old Covenant priest administered these sanction-producing sacraments. In ancient Israel, the whole nation was sanctified as a collective political and geographical unit; therefore, the sins of the priests threatened to bring the whole nation under God's negative sanctions. It was the Old Covenant church's sacramental function that entitled it to the tithe, beginning with Melchizedek (Gen. 14:18, 20).[73] It was not, contrary to Rushdoony, the Levites' cultural services that were the basis of their support by the tithe. It was their sacramental office.[74]

In the humanists' world of cosmic impersonalism, there is no priestly function except by, and in relation to, autonomous man. The priest is regarded as an intermediary between: (1) autonomous individual man and autonomous collective man; or (2) autonomous collective man and the autonomous cosmos. The priest may officially minister to mankind in the name of a god, however man or the cosmos is defined, but only in the name of the authority of the evolving species, mankind. Collective Man is the one true god.[75]

J. The Quasi-Priestly Function

The biblical state, as a provider of life-sustaining services—defense and protection against domestic violence and fraud—is also to be supported (and restrained) by the tithe principle: a publicly announced percentage (less than 10%)[76] of one's net income after tithes and of-

72. This implies that no one who refuses to pay a tithe to the local church is entitled to hold ecclesiastical office or exercise ecclesiastical sanctions. There has to be a distinction between communicant voting members and communicant non-voting members (children, imbeciles, and non-tithers.) See Gary North, "Two-Tiered Church Membership," *Christianity and Civilization*, No. 4 (1985), pp. 120–31. A modified version of this essay appears as Chapter 3 of *Tithing and the Church*.

73. North, *Sovereignty and Dominion*, ch. 21.

74. Appendix B.

75. This is not true of libertarian anarchism, where only individuals are gods: a theology of pure polytheism.

76. For the state to take as much as 10%, Samuel warned, is a mark of tyranny (I Sam. 8:15, 17). The principle of the "graduated tithe" or "progressive" income tax is morally

ferings is to be taken by the entire state apparatus, bottom to top, in order to support its operations. The state must be limited in its claims because it, too, possesses a God-granted monopoly: *the monopoly of violence*. Such sovereign power is always placed by God within judicial and other boundaries. The state is not merely one additional institution among many, with its departments competing against other organizations on a free market governed by what economists call consumer sovereignty.[77] The free market offers open bidding for scarce resources. Most people perceive clearly that the courtroom decisions of a civil judge must not be governed by the free market's principle of "high bid wins."[78] They recognize that this principle of pricing in a courtroom is a form of bribery.

Those who control access to the means of temporal life take on a quasi-priestly role. Society acknowledges this by placing judicial restraints on those who are in a monopoly position to sell the implements of life to the highest bidder, e.g., physicians. People somehow sense that biological life, like eternal life, should not be sold to the highest bidder by monopolists.[79] They perceive that the free market principle of "high bid wins" is sometimes a morally inappropriate pricing method.[80]

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monstrous. It compels individuals with higher incomes to pay a greater proportion of their incomes than poorer people pay in order to receive state protection. If the Mafia required this, it would be designated as a "protection racket," yet most economists and moralists, not to mention the voters, applaud the graduated income tax. The graduated income tax is inherently socialistic, for it encourages the majority of men to accept an ever-increasing state authority over the economy by voting for programs that richer people, always a political minority, will supposedly pay for. Yet even the great free market economist Ludwig von Mises refused to call the progressive income tax socialistic. See Mises, *Nation, State, and Economy: Contributions to the Politics and History of Our Time* (New York: New York University Press, [1919] 1983), pp. 201–2. Marx and Engels knew that it was socialistic; it was the second step in their ten-point program to establish Communist rule, right after "Abolition of all property in land and application of all rents of land to public purposes." Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (1848), in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1976), VI, p. 505.

77. Biblically speaking, we should speak of customer *authority* rather than consumer *sovereignty*, since the free market is not an oath-bound covenantal agency, and does not possess sovereignty in the biblical sense.

78. A rare intellectual defense of a competitive, non-legislative, exclusively free market legal system, written by a legal theorist, is Bruno Leoni, *Freedom and the Law* (Princeton, New Jersey: Van Nostrand, 1961). Three decades later came Bruce L. Benson's *The Enterprise of Law: Justice Without the State* (San Francisco: Pacific Research Institute for Public Policy, 1990). The problem is this: identifying which court has jurisdiction in a specific territory. Who possesses the superior jurisdiction?

79. Actually, physicians are more like oligopolists: semi-competing groups of monopoly rent-seekers.

80. It is the quasi-priestly function, and not merely the monopoly grant of power

For example, consider the case of a physician who stops to examine a critically injured victim of an accident. The victim is still conscious. The physician persuades the victim to pay him the monetary value of the victim's whole estate in exchange for emergency treatment. He even writes up a contract to this effect. The victim signs it. This conceptually voluntary transaction will not be upheld, either by a civil court or a jury of the physician's peers, nor should it. The physician could even be stripped of his legal right to practice medicine. The fact that this exchange of medical treatment for money was technically and legally a voluntary transaction between consenting adults is not given credence in the civil courts, nor should it be. The role of the physician as a healer has always militated against a purely free market, "high bid wins" approach to the provision of life-saving service, at least in emergency circumstances where only one supplier of healing services is immediately available to the patient. The grant of semi-monopoly status by the state to state-licensed physicians in the twentieth century was given on condition that the economic beneficiaries would not use this authority to strip patients of all of their wealth (just a lot of it on certain occasions).

That the buyers of medical services are called *patients* rather than *customers* is indicative of the distinction between medicine and other occupations. A patient is someone who waits patiently, a characteristic feature of buyers of medical services. It is understood by all participants that buyers of medical services will be forced to wait—to "line up"—which is a universal feature of pricing systems that are not based on the free market's "high bid wins" principle. But socialism makes lines much longer by mandating fees that are too low to encourage a large supply of services.[81] This is why the imposition of medical price restraints retroactively by juries should be limited to life-threatening situations in which the victim had no opportunity to shop for a lower price. This ought to be a power rarely invoked; otherwise, the supply of conventional medical services will become artificially restricted by law.

The office of quasi-priest became a growth industry in the twentieth century. There are today numerous candidates for the office of

by state and local governments, that leads to the phenomenon of price discrimination, i.e., different prices being charged for the same service to different buyers. On the role of government coercion against unlicensed health providers as a factor in medical pricing, see Reuben A. Kessel, "Price Discrimination in Medicine," *Journal of Law and Economics*, I (1958), pp. 20–53.

81. Gary North, "Step to the Rear, Please," *The Freeman* (March 1975).

social redeemer, each with its own priesthood. The state is frequently regarded as the only legitimate candidate for savior of society, and therefore it is honored as an agency possessing a priestly function. Politicians and bureaucrats are its priests, and public school teachers are the Levites.

Psychology is often regarded as possessing redemptive (healing) power. The needs of the unconscious, either individual (Freud) or collective (Jung), have called forth a quasi-priestly response. Psychiatrists (M.D.'s) are the priests; psychologists (Ph.D.'s) are the Levites.

Trade unions for several decades were regarded by the public as agencies of social salvation. They are supported by a compulsory dues system that is in part governed by the tithe principle. Union leaders were long seen the priests; local organizers were the Levites.[82]

Sports have been regarded by the public as a means of social redemption: in ancient Greece, in the Mayan culture, in England beginning in the early nineteenth century, and in the United States beginning in the late nineteenth century. Fans of soccer (football) in Europe become religious in intense loyalty. So do sports fans in other nations. Behavior that in ancient Rome was called Saturnalian—lawless, irrational, sometimes violent—is tolerated before, during, and after major games.[83] Athletes are the priests; today, television announcers are the Levites. Amateur sports are not supposed to be promoted in terms of free market pricing.[84] Professional athletics, however,

82. Philip D. Bradley (ed.), *The Public Stake in Union Power* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1959); Sylvester Petro, *Power Unlimited: The Corruption of Union Leadership* (New York: Ronald Press, 1959).

83. After the Chicago Bulls basketball team, led by international sports idol Michael Jordan, won the National Basketball Association championship in 1992, fans began a two-day riot in Chicago. The rioting was worse a year later when the Bulls won again. In England, gangs exist only to follow their local soccer teams from city to city, drinking and rioting during and after the games. These gangs are not youthful; members' ages range into their thirties. See Bill Buford, *Among the Thugs* (New York: Norton, 1992).

84. The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) and its rival associations penalize colleges that pay too much money in order to recruit superior athletes, i.e., money or bonuses above scholarship aid and minimal funds for room and board expenses. As economist Benjamin Rogge [ROEguee] once pointed out, this is a form of monopoly behavior designed to reduce price competition from the most successful teams. Professional sports leagues in the United States have been granted similar price restraints, such as rules against a player's selling his services to a new team ("jumping") without the first team's permission, for which the original team's owners must be compensated by the second team's owners. The first team's owners are therefore given property rights to future increases in the value of their players' assets, i.e., the players' marketable skills. Some modifications have been made in the older rules, but these are marginal, applying only to players whose contracts have expired.

are price-competitive, which means that they are not economically priestly. But because they compete with churches for attendance on Sunday, they do take on a priestly aspect.[85] It is revealing that professional basketball and football leagues in the United States try not to compete directly with the scheduling of those particular college sports from which they recruit their players.[86] This is especially true of American football, where collegiate games take place on Friday evenings and Saturday afternoons. Professional football games are usually held on Sunday. Professional football leagues care a great deal about infringing on amateur collegiate football games; they care nothing about infringing on public church worship. Neither do their fans.

There is generally only one international high priest in modern sports: the world heavyweight boxing champion, and only if he becomes a celebrity.[87] He engages in an activity that is designed to inflict physical injury. A boxer is allowed by law to kill his opponent in the ring with his fists. The heavyweight champion is the boxer who is most physically capable of killing someone in the ring. Professional boxers in some states in the United States are required to register their fists as lethal weapons. Outside the ring, they are not allowed to inflict physical damage on others, i.e, *outside a sanctified boundary*.[88]

There are other claimants to quasi-priestly authority, but they are price competitive, and therefore they cannot be regarded as priestly.

In the opinion of modern man, a priest possesses far less authority than a political ruler does. The priest does not exercise comparable visible power, and modern humanism is overwhelmingly a power religion. The state is visibly the most powerful single institution in

85. Televised sports programs in the United States are frequently viewed at home by groups of men who get together to eat pizza and drink beer. This social fellowship is modern man's Sunday substitute for church and the Lord's Supper. Pastor Joseph Welch pointed this out to me.

86. This is not true of American baseball, which operates its own profit-seeking "farm" clubs to train its players. High school and college baseball is a minor sport, attended by few and rarely televised.

87. The most famous athlete on earth for over a decade (1963–80) was Muhammad Ali, in large part because he converted to a peculiar American variant of Islam, but also because on religious grounds he refused to register for the draft during the Vietnam War.

88. That this activity takes place in a circumscribed area—a ring—is indicative of its supposedly sacred character. Outside the sacred ring, the same activity would be illegal. A boundary rope transforms the common into the sacred. Biblically speaking, the ring possesses no sacred status; boxing to the death is a biblically illegal act. Boxing is the last remaining legal equivalent of the duel, and therefore a decidedly anti-Christian activity. On dueling, see North, *Authority and Dominion*, ch. 35:D.

modern society. Because of this concentration of visible power, *the indispensable sacraments* for modern man are political, the most basic of which is the exercise of the franchise: to provide legitimacy to the state. The church, in contrast, has little visible power. The suggestion that an ecclesiastical priest could somehow commit a private sin that might in some way bring those under his authority into danger, assuming this sin remains exclusively private, would be regarded as preposterous. It would not be a topic fit for serious public discussion.

K. The Authority of the People

The people as a collective unit exercised greater judicial authority in Mosaic Israel than the priesthood, who merely represented the people before God. It was the people who were derivatively sovereign under God, in both church and state, not their representatives. This should be obvious: *the judicial function of representatives is, after all, to represent*. The representative's judicial authority is based solely on his occupying a mid-way position between God and the covenanted assembly that he represents. *God therefore held the people of Israel corporately responsible for the official actions of the priests*.

This leads to an important covenantal conclusion: *it is the moral character of the people that determines the public character and historical fate of society*. The collective nation is represented in church and state by ordained individuals whose acts necessarily have covenantal consequences in history because of God's sanctions; nevertheless, it is the people who will receive the brunt of God's judgment, for it is they who possess greater authority under God.

If my thesis on the primary connection between priest and people is correct, then the fundamental political thrust of Old Testament covenant theology was toward *theocratic republicanism*: the political authority of formally covenanted citizens. In both church and state, *the locus of institutional authority in Old Covenant Israel flowed upward*: from the people to their legal representatives. The moral integrity of the ecclesiastical hierarchy was of greater importance for the survival of a biblically covenanted society than the political hierarchy's integrity was.

In church and state, those people who possess initiatory earthly authority—church members and citizens—are those who are under the formal jurisdiction of superiors who possess *derivative* authority: officers. The officers' authority is derived from above—God—but also from below, i.e., those who are under their oath-bound authority.

Those people who are under the visible sanctions of these two covenantal institutions are those who are required by God to exercise institutional sanctions: positive and negative. Formal acts of covenant renewal periodically manifest this God-derived sanctioning authority of the people.[89] This is why *there are no acts of covenant renewal for the family*: there are no formal sanctioning powers held by those who are under the authority of the head of the household.[90] Authority is delegated downward by God to the head of the household, not upward from his wife or children.

It is important to note at this point that this system of republican representation was not (and is not) true of the family. The father was (and still is) the source of initiatory authority in the family. The reason for the difference between family authority and authority in both church and state is that the household unit of parents and children is temporary: adult sons leave the household of the parents in order to set up their own households (Gen. 2:24). Prior to their departure, the children are not held by God to be legally responsible agents. Thus, the representative character of covenantal authority must flow from the father, as the head of the household, to minor children, who are not legally independent agents. Sons in Israel became legally independent at age 20, when they became subject to the draft, i.e., military numbering (Ex. 30:13–14).[91] Wives and those unmarried daughters who remained in their fathers' households did not obtain legal independence, as testified by the fact that their vows had to be sanctioned within 24 hours by the male head of the household in order to become legally binding before God; only widows could take a vow independently as heads of their household (Num. 30:9).[92]

89. The negative sanction may be imposed by leaving the jurisdiction of the particular institutional authority. This is called "voting with your feet."

90. Minor children are not legally allowed to flee the jurisdiction of the head of the household. Civil governments are required to return runaway children to their parents unless the civil authorities can prove in civil court that the parents have broken the family covenant by child abuse, either moral or physical. On the other hand, adult children cannot legally be compelled to return to their parents' household. This is why the parent-authorized, forcible "de-programming" of adult cult members is biblically illegal; it is a form of kidnapping.

91. .North, *Authority and Dominion*, ch. 58.

92. I disagree strongly with John Frame's assertion that "state authority is essentially family authority, developed and extended somewhat by the demands of number and geography." Frame, "Theology of the State," *op. cit.*, p. 216. He made this familystate connection the basis of his call for Christian civil government, even going so far as to call this institution a "family-state" (p. 218). Such a position is incipient political patriarchalism, a denial that state and family are established by separate covenants.

The democratic state is marked by acts of covenant renewal, e.g., voting: what can

L. The Authority of the Priest

The priest who committed an unintentional sin brought the covenanted nation of Israel under the threat of God's negative sanctions. He had to sacrifice a bullock to atone judicially for this sin. Similarly, if the people *as a covenanted nation* committed an unintentional sin, the priest had to sacrifice a bullock to atone for their sin. Because the people could not know of a priest's sin, he had to guard himself carefully. Their ignorance was no automatic safeguard to them, any more than the ignorance of the 36 victims of the first battle of Ai regarding Achan's sin safeguarded them (Josh. 7:5).

The atoning sacrifice was killed at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. This ritual barrier was a two-way barrier: keeping the polluting effects of the priest's sins contained inside the tabernacle until he could offer a sacrifice, and containing the pollution of the people's sin outside the tabernacle, so that God would not depart from the holy of holies. *The doorway was the place of judgment, just as it had been on the night of the first Passover*. It was the barrier against God's sanctions, just as it had been on the night of the first Passover.[93] This threat of God's departure accentuated the importance of boundaries. These boundaries could not be violated with impunity.

The Mosaic Covenant's sacrificial system announced that the integrity of the priests and the people regarding unintentional sins was of greater consequence in relation to God's negative covenant sanctions than was the integrity of the civil authorities. It is incumbent upon theologians, whether liberal or fundamentalist, who assert that there is no comparable relationship in the New Covenant era, to prove their case from Scripture.

M. The Social Atomism of Christian Individualism

Wenham's comment on the purification offerings is typical of the modern Christian mindset: an implicit denial of God's sanctions against the community as a result of an individual's sins. Wenham individualized the New Testament meaning of the purification offerings. "For the NT writers it is the blood of Christ which cleanses

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be called political anointing. The family has no formal acts of covenant renewal. Those under the authority of the head of the household do not vote on the continuing authority of this God-designated agent. There is no institutional means for subordinates in the family to bring lawful sanctions against the head of the household without an appeal to officers in either church or state, except in cases where their lives are immediately threatened.

93. Jordan, *Law of the Covenant*, Appendix F.

from the defilement of sin.... Thus the cleansing from sin that was secured under the old covenant through the purification offering is effected under the new covenant by the death of Christ. Whereas in the Levitical laws it was the place of worship that was purified, under the new dispensation it is the worshipper himself."[94] Wenham made his position inescapably clear: the threat of God's negative sanctions today is aimed solely at the individual Christian.

> Lev. 4 makes explicit that sin defiles the sanctuary: it makes it impossible for God to dwell among his people. Though Israel was still the chosen people, when it sinned it no longer enjoyed the benefits of God's presence (cf. Exod. 32; Lev. 10; Num. 14, etc.). In a similar way the Christian is warned not to "grieve the Spirit" (Eph. 4:30) by sin. God's presence is now mediated by the Holy Spirit indwelling the believer (Eph. 2:22); that is why Christ's death has to purify our "conscience" or "heart." There is the continued threat in the NT that sin can drive the Spirit from the believer just as under the law God could be driven from the tabernacle. The Christian is told to walk in the Spirit and be filled with the Spirit (Gal. 5:25; Eph. 5:18).[95]

There is no suggestion in his comments on this passage regarding the threat of corporate sanctions. He clearly did not believe that there is any such threat, despite Revelation 2 and 3. This is a shared assumption of modern Christianity and modern humanism.

The problem with this internalizing of the New Covenant's ethical concern is that it assumes that the national covenantalism of the Old Testament is no longer judicially binding or relevant. The national sanctions supposedly no longer apply. God does not threaten to depart from a nation, since He supposedly never establishes any unique *judicial presence* in a nation.[96] God apparently establishes covenants only with individuals.[97] This individualistic view of God's covenants is basic to the pietist-humanist alliance. This alliance asserts that there is no role for biblical law in the political order. There is supposedly no relationship between adherence to biblical law and national blessings.[98]

Wenham rested his case for the New Testament's internalization of ethical concern with a two-step argument: (1) in the Mosaic era, the polluting effects of sin were geographical rather than personal; (2) in

94. Wenham, *Leviticus*, p. 101.

95. *Ibid.*, pp. 102–3.

96. See fundamentalist theologian Albert J. Dager, *Vengeance Is Ours: The Church In Dominion* (Redmond, Washington: Sword, 1990), pp. 205–34.

97. What about families? What about churches? Wenham does not raise either question.

98. For a detailed study of the intellectual foundations of this alliance, see North, *Millennialism and Social Theory*.

the New Covenant era, the situation is reversed. He was incorrect on both points. First, in Old Covenant Israel, both the individual and the place of worship were polluted by sin, which is why God threatened to leave the sanctuary. This threat was made not merely because of the pollution effects of sin geographically; it was the pollution of individuals *within the geographical boundaries of His national covenant* (Deut. 8:19–20).[99] Both the individual and the place of worship were cleansed by the offering.

Second, on what New Testament basis can we say that this twofold effect of sin and purification is not equally true today? Within the church the same effects of moral pollution continue, which is why God threatens negative sanctions. "And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth" (Rev. 3:14–16). This is the New Testament era's equivalent of the land's spewing-out process in the Mosaic Covenant: "Ye shall therefore keep all my statutes, and all my judgments, and do them: that the land, whither I bring you to dwell therein, spue you not out" (Lev. 20:22). The land was said figuratively to serve as God's sanctioning agent.[100] "That the land spue not you out also, when ye defile it, as it spued out the nations that were before you" (Lev. 18:28). This warning regarding the previous inhabitants of the land was a variation of Deuteronomy 8:19–20: "And it shall be, if thou do at all forget the Lord thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them, I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish. As the nations which the Lord destroyeth before your face, so shall ye perish; because ye would not be obedient unto the voice of the Lord your God." There was a close relationship between individual sins and corporate judgment: if the community did not collectively offer ritual atonement, God promised to act against the family, city, tribe, or nation as a whole.

It could be argued that this relationship between minister and people holds only for the institutional church, but this line of argumentation refuses to deal with the question of national covenants under God, which are to be the result of the Great Commission: "Go

99. Gary North, *Inheritance and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Deuteronomy*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [1999] 2012), ch. 23.

100. Chapter 10.

ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Matt. 28:19–20). Nations are to be baptized. They are to be brought formally and publicly under God's covenant sanctions.[101] The Great Commission is opposed to Christian individualism. It is also in direct opposition to the modern humanist concept of political pluralism.[102]

N. The Moral Atomism of the Enlightenment

We now come to the application of all this to the field of political economy. The following material is too important to consign to an appendix, yet it is complex. For those unfamiliar with Western political theory, it will be difficult. It will seem out of place in a chapter on the purification sacrifices. Nevertheless, what I have argued so far has been preparatory for this delayed exercise in applied theology. The biblical concept of corporate responsibility, imbedded in the purification sacrifices, has extensive implications for political theory, which in turn affects economic theory. Later in this commentary I will begin to draw out the positive implications of Leviticus for biblical political economy.

1. Bible vs. Enlightenment

Before we get to these passages, however, we must recognize a crucial fact: *the Bible is at war with the Enlightenment*. For developing a

101. Hal Lindsey, the "pop dispensationalist" author, clearly saw the threat to dispensational theology of this clear teaching of Scripture; therefore, he argued that the Greek word for *nations* means only *individuals*, not nations. "You don't disciple nations, you disciple individuals, so the Greek word translated *nations* should be understood in its most frequently used sense—*gentiles*." Lindsey, *The Road to Holocaust* (New York: Bantam, 1989), p. 49. He assumed—but did not attempt to prove and could not possibly prove—that the use of the word "gentiles" throughout the Bible (including the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament) means individual gentiles rather than covenantal nations of gentiles. I challenge any professionally trained theologian to defend such a view of the Greek word *ethnos*. The entry in Kittel's *Theological Dictionary* states that "In most cases *ethnos* is used of men in the sense of a 'people.' Synon. are: *phulei* (people as a national unity of common descent), *laos* (people as a political unity with a common history and constitution) and *glossa* (people as a linguistic unity)." Entry for "*Ethnos* in the NT," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, ed. Gerhard Kittel, 10 vols. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1964), II, p. 369. The same is true of the Septuagint's use of *ethnos*: *ibid.*, II, pp. 364–69. While Lindsey is an easy target, intellectually speaking, virtually all of modern fundamentalism and pietism implicitly assumes the truth of what Lindsey has written about the meaning of ethnos.

102. North, *Political Polytheism*.

systematically biblical political theory and biblical economics, a full understanding of this statement is crucial. The problem is, Protestantism, especially Anglo-American Protestantism, has been heavily influenced by the Enlightenment. What I call the right wing of the Enlightenment, also known as the Whig tradition, has been unhesitatingly absorbed into Protestant political theory, beginning in the late seventeenth century. Thus, very few Protestant evangelicals are aware of the degree that they have been compromised by the presuppositions of the Enlightenment. They have repeatedly used the formative ideas of the Enlightenment's right wing to challenge the Enlightenment's left wing. This dependence on the categories of the right wing has undermined their commitment to biblical judicial categories. This has weakened the case for Christianity. For example, Christians rarely understand that Darwinism is a product of the Enlightenment's right wing, not the left wing. The doctrine of evolution through natural selection is an extension into biology of the Scottish Enlightenment's concept of social evolution: society as the product of individual human action but not of human design.[103] They do not understand the terms of surrender to the Enlightenment, terms which they have virtually all implicitly signed in their legal capacity as voters: the substitution of Enlightenment contractualism—agreement among equals—for biblical covenantalism, which is an agreement among men under God's authority, law, and sanctions.[104] It was this shift from covenantalism to contractualism that transformed New England Puritanism into Unitarianism, beginning in the late eighteenth century.[105]

Western social philosophy for over three centuries has been a systematic attempt to replace a covenantal interpretation of all three institutional governments: church, state, and family. Nevertheless, this biblical model is inescapable; it is built into the creation (Gen. 1:26–28).[106] Furthermore, because Western civilization was self-consciously Christian until the late eighteenth century, its political theory has always been colored by the categories of Christian theology. Thus, in order to maintain intellectual continuity between the past

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103. F. A. Hayek, *Studies in Philosophy, Politics and Economics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), ch. 6. Cf. North, *Sovereignty and Dominion*, Appendix B: "The Evolutionists' Defense of the Market."

104. North, *Political Polytheism*, Part 3.

105. Leonard J. Trinterud, "The Origins of Puritanism," *Church History*, XX (1951), pp. 41–42, 49–55.

106. North, *Sovereignty and Dominion*, chaps. 3, 4.

and contemporary culture, the opponents of covenant theology have had to substitute a series of theoretical alternatives to the categories of the biblical covenant—sovereignty, hierarchy, law, sanctions, and continuity—but with autonomous man as the new source of political order.

In the second half of the seventeenth century, secularism outside of political philosophy made its initial appearance: in science,[107] ethics,[108] and economics.[109] (Machiavelli a century earlier had already performed this service for political philosophy.) The heart of this new worldview was its rejection of *teleology*. Teleology views whatever exists as the result of design. It sees the world as being pulled toward something. Modern humanist man asserts that the ultimate "something" toward which the world must not be moving is the day of final judgment. This anti-teleological outlook is comprehensive in its denial of final causation: not a trace of such causation can be admitted to exist anywhere in the universe prior to the advent of man.

2. Science Without Teleology

The new science of the West after Galileo systematically rejected both the medieval and classical Greek doctrines of final causation.[110] Scientific causation denied all temporal "pull" and affirmed temporal "push" as the exclusive form of physical causation. Physicist Fred Wolf summarized the Newtonian outlook: "For every effect, there had to be a known cause. For every cause, there had to be accountable effects. The future, therefore, became a consequence of the past. It seemed there was little anyone could do to alter the world. Even our thoughts were to be explained somehow by Newton's machine."[111] All of modern science has been premised on this anti-teleological faith, but this did not become self-conscious in the biological sciences until Darwin's *Origin of Species* (1859).[112]

107. The Royal Society, created by charter by King Charles II in 1661, was the archetype.

108. Louis I. Bredvold, *The Brave New World of the Enlightenment* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1961), ch. 2: "The New Promise of Science."

109. William Letwin, *The Origins of Scientific Economics* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1963).

110. E. A. Burtt, *The Metaphysical Foundations of Modern Physical Science* (Garden City, New York: Anchor, [1931] 1954), pp. 98–104.

111. Fred Alan Wolf, *Taking the Quantum Leap* (New York: Harper & Row, [1981] 1989), p. 42.

112. Gary North, *Is the World Running Down? Crisis in the Christian Worldview* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1988), ch. 2.

Science today "modestly" and agnostically affirms its procedures as being so narrowly circumscribed that the scientific disciplines are incapable of leading men to any legitimate conclusion regarding the inherently unscientific thesis that history is moving toward God's final judgment. This is another way of saying that *God's final sanctions are scientifically irrelevant*—unverifiable, transcendent, and transhistorical—because they are beyond measurement by scientific techniques of investigation. The scientific discussion of cosmic origins and eschatology (i.e., the Big Bang and the heat death of the universe) is conducted in terms of discussions of processes and rates of change that either exist today or else can be inferred by means of evidence interpreted in terms of today's rates of change (i.e., uniformitarianism). This is how modern science attempts to transform the transhistorical and personal into the historical and impersonal. Modern scientists conclude that there can be no final causes in nature, only prior causes. This viewpoint regarding final causation has in fact defined modern science for over three centuries. Quantum physics has gone a step further, however: to begin to deny causation altogether.[113] God is not mocked!

This modern scientific model has greatly influenced Western historical thinking. Cause and effect in history are said to be exclusively historical: events in the past have alone made the present possible. Some event must happen in the present in order to make possible something specific in the future. Nothing happens in the future that makes the present possible, nor does any force in nature propel nature toward a predestined future. There can be no predestined future until such time as man is capable of predestinating it. Man subdues nature (including himself)[114] in a supposedly contingent, chance-dominated universe that is somehow governed by scientifically absolute laws.[115]

3. Ethical Effects

This "push, not pull" theory of causation has had a revolutionary effect on ethics. Because the new science rejected the scientific legitimacy of final causation in nature, it also repudiated as scientifically useless any concept of a God who intervenes historically in the

113. Norwood Russell Hanson, *Observation and Explanation: A Guide to the Philosophy of Science* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), pp. 34–35.

114. That is, some men subdue others.

115. The dialecticism between chance and law is the essence of all nonbiblical thought. See Herman Dooyeweerd, *In the Twilight of Western Thought* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1960), pp. 36–52.

cosmos in terms of positive and negative sanctions based on ethical standards. Ethics is understood to be grounded on the doctrine of the autonomy (self-law) of man; therefore, science officially has nothing to say about ethics. Thus, the more authority that the scientific worldview has gained in men's thinking, the less that ethics has been said to be relevant to the affairs of man. *The denial of final causation was the cause; ethical relativism was the effect*. The Socialist A. D. Lindsay wrote in 1943: "The new sciences which came into being in the seventeenth century and have gone on growing in prestige ever since began with a repudiation of final causes. That repudiation is the denial of the authority of ethics in science. The new sciences were as energetic as the new politics in denying the supremacy of morality."[116]

The rejection of final causation and all ethical authority based on final causation was only part of the new science's paradigm. Lindsay continued: "The scientific revival of the seventeenth century not only repudiated final purposes. It revived atomism."[117] This scientific atomism, with physics as the model, then reshaped political theory. "When men are regarded as objects of scientific inquiry so conceived, they are regarded as atomistic individuals, not as personalities. Society is regarded as analysable into a collection of independent, isolable, alike atoms."[118] This is the humanistic philosophy of cosmic impersonalism. It leads to the adoption of the perverse definition of the individual that Arthur Koestler attributed to Communism in his novel on Stalin's purge trials of the late 1930s, *Darkness at Noon*: one million men, divided by one million.[119]

If carried to its logical conclusion, which few scientists have been willing to do in public, this seemingly neutral assertion regarding the nature of cause and effect denies the possibility of either personal responsibility or human freedom, except insofar as philosophy adopts dialecticism or irrationalism in place of strict materialistic causation when dealing with man and nature.[120] The ethical implications of a de-

116. A. D. Lindsay, *The Modern Democratic State* (New York: Oxford University Press, [1943] 1959), p. 78.

117. *Ibid*., p. 79.

118. *Idem*.

119. Arthur Koestler, *Darkness at Noon* (New York: Macmillan, 1941), p. 257.

120. Lindsay, pp. 42–46; cf. Sidney Hook (ed.), *Determinism and Freedom in the Age of Modern Science* (Washington Square, New York: New York University Press, 1958). In the twentieth century, more social scientists were willing to argue in this fashion. Behavioral psychologists were the most vocal examples. See the works of John B. Watson and B. F. Skinner, especially Skinner's *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* (New York: Knopf, 1971). For a libertarian, "free will" critique, see Tibor R. Machan, *The Pseudo-Science of*

terministic cosmology have not been universally perceived, but over the last three centuries there has been a steady erosion of confidence in the decision-making ability of individuals and a steady increase in the denial of personal responsibility.

O. The Enlightenment's Two Wings

The Western tradition of political and moral philosophy ever since the late seventeenth century has been divided between two rival wings: left-wing Enlightenment thought and right-wing Enlightenment thought. The second tradition is more self-consciously individualistic and contractual. The defenders of both Enlightenment traditions base their speculations on a hypothetical contract among men that created the political community in the past. The right-wing Enlightenment saw this compact as requiring voluntary acts of renewal from time to time, or at least implicit formal acceptance, in order to provide legitimacy to the civil order. Standard histories of modern political philosophy usually begin with either Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan* (1651) or John Locke's *Second Treatise of Government* (1690). The origin of this worldview is at least two centuries earlier: the humanism of the Renaissance. Nisbet's summary of Renaissance individualism goes right to the heart of the matter: the rejection of Christianity.

> What the humanists did wish to serve, as their lives and writings make plain enough, were the power and wealth of the princes around them and a conception of religion that is highly subjective and individualistic. The individualism that is to be seen in the flamboyance, cultivated eccentricity, bravado, and diverse color of the Italian Renaissance can be seen in different but related form in the preoccupation with self and the innumerable states of consciousness of self. Rarely in history has there been an age comparable to the Renaissance—not only in Italy but in France and other parts of the West—in its dedication to the individual and the most individualistic types of thought and conduct. . . .
>
> We must not overlook what is central here: the erosion of the sense of religious community. It does not matter that the Renaissance may be associated in our minds with some of the most vital and creative qualities of mankind, not to mention literary and artistic works of boundless importance. We are concerned with the fate of the Christian community during this early-modern period. And we can hardly escape the conclusion that everything serving the interests of the secular and the subjective, no matter

B. F. Skinner (New Rochelle, New York: Arlington House, 1974). See also R. J. Rushdoony, *The Messianic Character of American Education: Studies in the History of the Philosophy of Education* (Nutley, New Jersey: Craig Press, 1963), ch. 16: "J. B. Watson: Science and Utopia."

> how brilliant and lasting in the history of Western culture, was bound to militate against that communal and corporate conception of Christianity born of Augustine which became the very cornerstone of medieval civilization.[121]

Both Hobbes and Locke began their speculations with the assumption of the autonomy of the individual. Each author created a self-consciously hypothetical history[122] in which autonomous men in a hypothetical state of nature met together and voluntarily transferred a portion of their authority to the king, as representative of the body politic. In this Enlightenment political tradition, *authority moves upward, from the citizen to the representative*. An individual in the pre-political state of nature was supposedly originally sovereign: possessing the autonomous power to establish the civil covenant. He voluntarily delegated political authority to those above him. Statecraft in this view is ultimately grounded in the sovereign will of individuals, who in turn maintain the political order through obedience to their representatives. These representatives do not in theory need to be elected, although ever since Locke, democratic theory has predominated in the West. The people are regarded as *sovereign*—possessing power to originate the civil covenant—and not just bearers of primary authority within the civil covenant.

Left-wing Enlightenment thought, which is self-consciously collectivist, is conventionally dated with the publication of Rousseau's *Social Contract* in 1762. Contrary to textbook accounts of the French Revolution, Rousseau and his now-famous book had very little influence in France or anywhere else during his lifetime and for at least two decades thereafter.[123] Rousseau, like Hobbes and Locke, began with a hypothetical history that grounded politics in the acts of autonomous men. In his *Essay on Inequality* (1755), he stated clearly that all previous political philosophers had felt it necessary to offer a theory of the state of nature, yet not one of them, he insisted, had discovered it. Rousseau recognized the cause of their difficulty: the Genesis account of the origin of society. "[I]t is clear from the Holy

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121. Robert A. Nisbet, *The Social Philosophers: Community and Conflict in Western Thought* (New York: Crowell, 1973), pp. 194–95.

122. On hypothetical history, see Robert A. Nisbet, *Social Change and History: Aspects of the Western Theory of Development* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), ch. 4.

123. Only one reprint appeared after 1762: in 1791. Joan Macdonald examined 1,114 pamphlets published in 1789–91; she found only a dozen references to it. She concluded: "It is necessary to distinguish between the cult of Rousseau and the influence of his political thought." Macdonald, *Rousseau and the French Revolution* (1965), cited in Paul Johnson, *Intellectuals* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988), p. 7.

Scriptures that the first man, having received his understanding and commandments immediately from God, was not himself in such a state; and that, if we give such credit to the writings of Moses as every Christian philosopher ought to give, we must deny that, even before the deluge, men were ever in the pure state of nature;. . ."[124] He then chose to ignore Moses by adding the classic foundational statement of the hermeneutics of hypothetical history: "Let us begin by laying facts aside, as they do not affect the question."[125] Western political man has been laying the Mosaic facts aside ever since.

Rousseau, in distinction from Locke, equated the general will of the post-"state of nature" society with the decisions of enlightened national rulers of a post-revolutionary era, not necessarily with a temporary political majority. Modern totalitarianism is an outworking of Rousseau's theory of the general will: the collective, unified will of all men in society as it would be able to manifest itself if there were no intermediary institutions and loyalties between the citizen and the central political order.[126] If men were allowed institutionally to be the social atoms that they are in principle, Rousseau taught, their general will would manifest itself exactly as it does in the will of the rulers. Nisbet was correct: Rousseau "saw goodness in popular will only to the extent that it had become liberated from all possible influences of traditional society. For Rousseau, the general will could exist, and could be invariably right in its judgments, only when its wielders, the people, had become purged of all social and cultural influences stemming from family, local community, guild, church, or other social elements. It was indeed this aspect of the matter that rendered Rousseau's doctrine of the general will the single most revolutionary doctrine in the history of political thought. Popular sovereignty was, as we observed, for Rousseau a means of permanent revolution in the social order."[127] Few ideas have been more productive of evil in the modern world.[128]

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124. Jean Jacques Rousseau, "A Dissertation on the Origin and Foundation of the Inequality of Mankind" (1755), in *The Social Contract and Discourses*, ed. G. D. H. Cole, Everyman's Library (New York: Dutton, [1913] 1966), p. 161.

125. *Idem.*

126. Robert A. Nisbet, *Tradition and Revolt: Historical and Sociological Essays* (New York: Random House, 1968), ch. 1: "Rousseau and Political Community." Cf. Nisbet, *The Making of Modern Society* (Brighton, Sussex: Wheatsheaf, 1986), chaps. 5, 6.

127. Nisbet, *Social Philosophers*, p. 400.

128. The doctrine of the collective, tradition-free will of the sovereign people has only begun to lose its appeal among Western intellectuals with the breakdown of the Communist economies in the late 1980s, and with the slaughter of the Chinese students by China's 27th Army in June of 1989, an event made visible internationally by satellite.

P. Enlightenment Thought and Corporate Responsibility

It is easier for those in the left-wing Enlightenment tradition to acknowledge some concept of corporate responsibility than for those in the right wing. By adopting some version of Rousseau's general will as manifested in the decisions of the civil rulers, they have been able to equate civil government with the collective will of the people, meaning people bound together only in their capacity as citizens—the only legitimate form of corporate bonding in the view of the left-wing Enlightenment.[129] The decisions of the rulers are said to be in fact the decisions of the collective people.

Those in the right-wing Enlightenment political tradition have historically been more ready to deny the possibility of corporate responsibility, for such a concept seems to be at odds with the individualistic tradition. This was especially true of political philosophy prior to the transformation of political thought by the American Progressives in the late nineteenth-century. Progressives adopted a form of Darwinism which offered as its ideal a centrally planned state run by scientists.[130] Atomism in right-wing Enlightenment thought allows for legitimate multiple bondings based on criteria other than political order as such. It therefore allows pluralism; indeed, it requires it.[131] Atomistic individuals must not be prohibited by the state from making contracts among themselves even if these contracts are not inherently political, although contracting individuals are necessarily under an overall political jurisdiction.[132] Unless a contract explicitly says otherwise, contracts are regarded as enforceable by the state. So, even in the right-wing Enlightenment tradition—except for the anarchist tradition—politics remains the common bond among the

129. Communist theory simply internationalized the French Revolution's concept of citizen: "Workers of the world, unite!" This internationalism had already been made explicit in the Masonic ideal of fraternity.

130. I refer here to the writings of Lester Frank Ward and the whole Progressive movement in the United States, 1890–1920. The earlier Social Darwinism of Herbert Spencer and William Graham Sumner was radically individualistic. See Richard Hofstadter, *Social Darwinism in American Thought*, rev. ed. (Boston: Beacon, 1955); Sidney Fine, *Laissez Faire and the General Welfare State: A Study of Conflict in American Thought, 1865–1901* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1956); Henry Steele Commager, *The American Mind: An Interpretation of American Thought and Character Since the 1880s* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1950), ch. 10.

131. Nisbet, *Social Philosophers*, pp. 418–29.

132. The left-wing Enlightenment model does not admit the existence of any zone of life that is not inherently political. Contracts are therefore political.

various secondary bonds.[133] *Political power is honored as the final court of appeal, the social order's ultimate sanctioning mechanism*.

Both wings of the Enlightenment therefore acknowledge some version of corporate responsibility. This responsibility is interpreted in terms of a worldview that assumes that the political universe is self-contained, meaning which mankind is politically autonomous. *Both wings see contractualism as the ultimate foundation of social order*: an original political contract (Hobbes and Rousseau), multiple economic contracts (Adam Smith), or implicit social contracts (Edmund Burke). In Enlightenment political theory, *contractualism replaced covenantalism*. The Enlightenment rejected biblical covenantalism's doctrine of responsibility: individual and corporate moral responsibility under a sovereign personal God who establishes fixed moral standards (boundaries) and who also brings sanctions in history—blessings and cursings—in terms of these standards.[134] In short, the Enlightenment rejected Moses, both as historian and law-giver. Modern evangelical Christian social theory rejects the continuing authority of Mosaic civil law. Evangelicals have adopted Enlightenment social theory, in effect baptizing it. This has been going on for three centuries.

Q. Adultery in High Places

Mosaic law specifies that unintentional sins of ecclesiastical officers can have consequences for the life of the collective nation. In contrast, the Renaissance-Enlightenment tradition denies the idea that the exclusively private sins of rulers can have any visible effect on society in general. Of course, all branches of this tradition would freely acknowledge that there can be national repercussions if a ruler has a mistress who happens to be a spy or the carrier of a venereal disease. However, few, if any, would acknowledge that there will be corporate repercussions if a ruler has a disease-free secret mistress who is never discovered, or whose relationship with the ruler is suppressed by the press,[135] assuming that he is not paralyzed by sexual guilt (which modern rulers never seem to be). The discussion of the public effects of a representative's private immorality would be limited, in the Re-

133. There are no legitimate secondary bonds in the left-wing Enlightenment model. To the extent that such bonds do exist in practice, they exist only at the discretion of the state.

134. Smith and Burke acknowledged that God will bring sanctions in eternity.

135. This was in the era before the Watergate affair (1972–74) declared "open season" for reporters on the other sorts of affairs by United States Presidents.

naissance-Enlightenment tradition, to considerations of such things as psychology, politics, medicine, and the military.[136]

The issue here is private intentional sins, not unintentional sins. If the public dismisses such obviously intentional sins as if they were the equivalent of unintentional minor infractions, God's corporate negative sanctions will come in history. Modern humanism's social ethics relegates private ethics, especially sexual ethics, to the realm of *adiaphora*: things irrelevant to the public good. The fornicators and adulterers who formulate social ethics prefer to dismiss such matters. The public has begun to think of sexual sins as irrelevant, i.e., of less concern than even unintentional sins. The old disdain for adultery attributed to the British upper classes has become nearly universal: "Do anything you wish in private, but don't disturb the horses."

Earlier in this chapter I wrote that "even a minor sin committed by a priest (though not the civil magistrate) threatened the whole community." A major private sin—a high-handed sin—by a civil ruler does threaten the whole community. The covenantal question is this: Does the community acknowledge the known sin as major, taking steps to place negative sanctions on the ruler, or at least pray that he depart from his wicked ways? If not, the community is threatened. It has treated a major sin by a civil ruler as if it were an unintentional sin by a priest. In fact, this is the very conclusion of rebellious clerics, who say nothing in public against the known sins of the ruler. The clerics thereby become the civil ruler's accomplices. God then applies negative corporate sanctions.

R. Transmission Belts

Combining half of the dualistic epistemology of Kant (the phenomenal realm only)[137] with the organizational theory of Lenin,[138] modern

136. This tradition of dismissing sexual sins as the least important of all sins can be seen in Edward Gibbon's masterpiece of Enlightenment historiography, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776–82). This study was a defense of the grandeur of that tyrannical empire. Gibbon argued that adultery committed by rulers, so long as it was a private affair, was no threat to the civil order. Effeminacy was dangerous only because it created softness in rulers—a potential military weakness. For citations, see Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Excellent Empire: The Fall of Rome And the Triumph of the Church* (New York: Harper & Row, 1987), pp. 58–60.

137. Richard Kroner, *Kant's Weltanschauung* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, [1916] 1956), ch. 4.

138. John P. Roche, *The History and Impact of Marxist-Leninist Organizational Theory: "Useful Idiots," "Innocents' Clubs," and "Transmission Belts"* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis, 1984).

social thought assumes that there must be institutional transmission belts in order for the private sins of rulers to have social consequences. These transmission belts must in principle be traceable by means of systematic techniques of investigation. That is, if video recordings or other records of the particular chain of events were available to investigators, these investigators could explain the historical results in terms of specific historical records. God, of course, cannot be recorded. He is "outside the loop." The very concept of a "chain of events" is indicative of this humanist mindset.[139] Any aspect of the sinful life of a ruler that could not in theory be traced through such historical records is not regarded as historically relevant to society. Put another way, the only historically significant events are those that can conceivably leave historical records, even if actual participants do not leave them in particular situations.

In short, no modern discussion of politics would begin with the suggestion that there can be negative sanctions brought against the nation as a whole as a result of the private sins of national rulers, assuming that these sins have no physical, informational, or judicial connection to the society. To discuss such a possibility necessarily would involve the consideration of a *supernatural sanctioning agency* that is above and outside the society. This supernaturalism means that a covenantal organization's representative is responsible upward to God and not just downward to the people. Such discussions would be considered improper, not just intellectually but even aesthetically. They would involve a breach of social etiquette. The modern world has thoroughly internalized the Enlightenment's worldview. American church historian Sydney Ahlstrom announced this universal principle of interpretation: "Providence cannot be invoked as an explanatory principle. Supernatural sources of insight or knowledge can not be claimed; . . ."[140]

Modern social thought has nevertheless transferred judicial sovereignty to numerous representative agencies, just as the ancient world did and the medieval world did. *There is no escape from the covenantal*

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139. This mindset is being challenged in our day by the rise of chaos theory, which asserts that even in the most rigorous of natural sciences, such cause-and-effect relationships are not completely knowable, even in principle. Causes and effects are no longer seen as part of an unbreakable chain. See James Gleick, *Chaos: Making a New Science* (New York: Viking, 1987). Irrationalism is once again challenging the assertions of rationalism.

140. Sydney E. Ahlstrom, "The Problem of the History of Religion in America," *Church History*, XXXIX (1970), p. 233.

doctrine of judicial representation and hierarchy. The primary difference between the modern world and the preceding worlds is the doctrine of the *autonomy of man*. Mankind is now regarded as independent of any personal forces in history other than those created by other men. Apart from mankind's own efforts, the only historically significant influences in man's environment supposedly are impersonal biological and environmental forces. This is modern man's doctrine of cosmic impersonalism.[141]

S. Sacramental Priesthood and Civil Congregation

The Old Covenant's system of sacrifices was based on man's need to atone for his sin. Adam broke his covenant with God. He violated his implicit oath of allegiance to God by disobeying the covenant's stipulations. Adam acted as a representative judicial agent for all mankind. Co-responsibility for Adam's sin is inherited from Adam; therefore, every person begins life at conception disinherited by God. Only adoption by God can overcome this automatic legal condition. The mark of adoption in the Abrahamic Covenant was circumcision; in the New Covenant, it is baptism.

1. Corporate Sins, Corporate Sanctions

Adam's rebellion made mandatory a system of blood sacrifices in order to reconcile God and man. The fourth category of Israel's sacrifices, purification offerings, involved unintentional corporate sins, either representatively or collectively (assembly and congregation), and therefore the threat of negative corporate sanctions.

The Bible places primary institutional authority on those who are primarily threatened by God's negative sanctions in history. In civil government, primary authority is lodged in the *congregation*: the corporate, judicially sanctified people who publicly covenant under God (Ex. 19). The people delegate authority to civil officers. This is why the Bible establishes a theocratic republic as the ultimate model for civil government. Kings came later (I Sam. 8).

If we follow Kline and assume that God no longer imposes predictable corporate sanctions in history,[142] then we will find it very difficult—I would say impossible—to identify the God-ordained locus

141. Gary North, *Sovereignty and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Genesis* (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [1982] 2012).

142. Meredith G. Kline, "Comments on an Old-New Error," *Westminster Theological Journal*, XLI (Fall 1978), p. 184.

of primary authority in civil government: king, legislature, judges, or people. Such a view of God's historical sanctions—the triumph of *operational indeterminacy*—makes impossible the development of an exclusively biblical standard for Christian social theory,[143] Christian economics, and Christian political theory. It is because God threatens predictable negative corporate sanctions in history that He delegates to individuals, churches, families and civil governments the judicial sovereignty to impose sanctions in his name, so as to avoid having to impose them more directly. On Kline's basis, it is not possible to identify who is at greatest risk of God's negative sanctions in history. Without a concept of God's predictable sanctions in history, it becomes impossible for Christians to use the Bible to correctly identify covenantal sovereignty and the loci of authority within this sovereignty. This is why Kline's doctrine of God's humanly indeterminate sanctions in history becomes the theological foundation for pluralism, both intellectual and political. It transforms the ideal of Christendom into a heresy.[144] Kline understood this; so do his published disciples.

While the Levitical sacrifices have been annulled (Heb. 9), the principle or representational authority revealed by the reparation offering has been in force since Adam's covenant. Through Adam death entered the world (Rom. 5:12). The obedience of the Pharaoh of Joseph's day brought God's corporate blessings on the Egyptians. Similarly, the rebellion of the Pharaoh of the exodus brought God's corporate cursings on the Egyptians. While the Israelite sacrificial system has been annulled, the principle of corporate responsibility and representation has not been annulled. Such corporate responsibility was manifested by the law of the purification sacrifice, not inaugurated by it.

2. Priesthood and People

The required sacrifices of Leviticus 4 reveal a tighter judicial link between priest and people than between king and people. The priest sacrificed a bullock for his sin. A bullock also atoned for the sin of the congregation (vv. 14–15). Civil rulers and private citizens brought lesser sacrifices. The civil ruler brought a male goat (vv. 22–26). The individual brought a female goat or lamb (vv. 27–35). This indicates

143. North, *Millennialism and Social Theory*, chaps. 7, 8.

144. Gary North, *Westminster's Confession: The Abandonment of Van Til's Legacy* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1991).

that the congregation was sacrificially closer to the priesthood than it was to the civil ruler. *The congregation possessed primary authority in civil government because the threat against them was great; hence, the more holy the required sacrificial animal*. The king operated by the authority delegated to him by the congregation (I Sam. 8). His required sacrificial animal was less holy—less associated with priestly sacrifice.

This tight covenantal relationship between sacramental priesthood and civil congregation still exists. God expects men to honor it. Nothing in the New Covenant has changed it. Without specific New Testament revelation to the contrary, there is judicial continuity from the Mosaic covenant to the New covenant: the Ten Commandments, the statutes, and their required civil sanctions. This is both the testimony and the offense of Christian Reconstruction. The New Testament's standard for civil government has to be the same as in Old Covenant law: *a theocratic republic*. The biblical concept of civil authority mandates republicanism: public consent by representatives of the nation to certain laws and forms of rulership (Ex. 19). A theocratic republic preceded kingship in Israel. Theocracy—i.e., rule by God—is established today through a biblically mandatory Trinitarian civil oath. The alternative is either another god's theocracy (e.g., Islamic nations and the state of Israel) or political polytheism, i.e., religious pluralism.[145] All liberals and most fundamentalists agree: political polytheism is morally mandatory for every nation. The fundamentalists except only the State of Israel. Orthodox Jewish Israelis agree with them, but most Jews do not.[146] The worldview of religious and political pluralism is governed by a self-conscious rejection of the ideal of Christendom.

The theocratic status of a civil government is also manifested by the presence of a priesthood. The congregation is a nation of priests (Ex. 19:6); so is the New Covenant church (I Peter 2:9). This broad Melchizedekan priesthood is represented before God in the church by a sacramental priesthood, one which is responsible for administering baptism and the Lord's Supper. The covenantal faithfulness of

145. North, *Political Polytheism*, ch. 7.

146. Jacob Neusner (b. 1932) is a Jewish conservative and the author, translator, or editor of about 1,000 books. (This is one book every three weeks for 40 years.) He reminded his readers: "We cannot build a decent society on secular foundations. Islam knows that; Judaism knows that; why should Christians say any less?" Jacob Neusner, "Who's Afraid of the Religious Right?" *National Review* (Dec. 27, 1993), p. 37. Yet he, too, called for a political alliance among Christians, Jews, and Muslims: political pluralism.

this sacramental priesthood—though not a sacrificing priesthood—is more important for the preservation of continuity and peace in society than the faithfulness of the politicians. (If God's blessings on society hinged primarily on the covenantal faithfulness of politicians, all would have been lost by Nimrod's day.)

3. The Centrality of the Church[147]

Christians are required by God to affirm the social centrality of the church. This presupposition must govern Christian social theory. The New Covenant church is the fulfillment of the promise of God to establish a kingdom of priests. Peter wrote: "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light" (I Peter 2:9). In this sense, God regards the church as a nation. Jesus prophesied to the leaders of Israel: "Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof" (Matt. 21:43). Like the priests of Israel, the ordained priests of the new temple must protect the assembled saints by not committing unintentional sins. Similarly, the assembled saints must not commit unintentional sins, in order to protect the society around them.

I conclude: *what is central to biblical social order is the preservation of Bible-based judicial sanctions inside the church. The church is more important than the state*. A society's creeds are more important than its civil constitution.[148] The sacraments are more important than the franchise. The tithe is more important than taxes. This is why combined taxes should not equal the tithe (I Sam. 8:15, 17). Until the twentieth century, with its messianic humanistic state and its endless, power-centralizing wars,[149] taxes in the West were below 10% of net capital increases plus income. The evidence of God's civil judgments on the once-Trinitarian West is the historically unprecedented escalation of wars and taxes in the twentieth century. There are predictable

147. Peter J. Leithart, *The Kingdom and the Power: Rediscovering the Centrality of the Church* (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P&R Publishing, 1993).

148. R. J. Rushdoony, *Foundations of Social Order: Studies in the Creeds and Councils of the Early Church* (Vallecito, California: Ross House, [1968] 1998).

149. Robert Higgs, *Crisis and Leviathan: Critical Episodes in the Growth of American Government* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991); Robert Nisbet, *The Present Age: Progress and Anarchy in Modern America* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988), ch. 1; Jonathan Kwitny, *Endless Enemies: The Making of an Unfriendly World* (New York: Congdon & Weed, 1984).

sanctions in history. (You have a choice: believe Meredith Kline[150] or believe your tax bills.)

What goes on inside the church sets the standard for the world. If the church refuses to enforce biblical law, then the state will surely also refuse. If moral corruption is the standard in the church, then moral corruption will be the standard in the state. Why is there this sociological pre-eminence of the church? Because the *priest-people relationship* is far more vital for social order than the *civil ruler-people relationship*. God has established His institutional church as the primary ethical model, not the family or the state. Neither the family nor the state—the bringer of exclusively negative sanctions—enters the post-resurrection New Heaven and New Earth; the church does (Rev. 21). But whenever the church refuses to enforce God's revealed law on its own members, the ethical and judicial standards of the political realm will become dominant in the church and family. This is the underlying motivation behind humanism's war against the authority of the church. This is why the state insists that the church does not possess an equal jurisdiction and therefore equal immunity from lawsuits. This is why the enemies of the church promote lawsuits against churches that excommunicate members for such public sins as adultery. (Another reason is income for lawyers.)[151] The humanists have a better grasp of the sociological implications of biblical covenantalism than the Christians do.[152]

Conclusion

The purification offerings linked ordained rulers to God's covenant people. The representatives of the people in both church and state were bound to the people through the details of God's law. There are no unacknowledged private sins on the part of ordained rulers that do not threaten the safety of the holy commonwealth. The corporate implications of private sins were the reason why rulers had to offer public sacrifice for their unintentional private transgressions of God's law.

150. Kline, "Comments on an Old-New Error," p. 184.

151. J. Shelby Sharpe, "The Nuclear Attack on Christianity in America Has Begun in Earnest," *Chalcedon Report* (Nov. 1990), pp. 2–9.

152. The leaders in Jerusalem felt compelled to set up a guard in front of Jesus' tomb in order to keep the disciples from stealing His body and claiming that He had risen from the dead (Matt. 27:62–66). Meanwhile, the disciples had scattered. The covenant-breakers understood the specifics of Jesus' prophecy; the disciples did not. This has been a continuing curse on the church from the beginning.

The institutional church in the Mosaic social order was basic to the survival of that order. The church was also crucial for the successful defense of liberty. The state possesses concentrated power; without the New Testament church's unique power of the gospel, the sacraments, and the threat of excommunication from the Lord's Supper, neither the family nor the institutional church can successfully resist the concentrated power of the modern state. Men's only reasonable hope in such a sanctions-free ecclesiastical world is in the collapse of the existing civil order because of its own incompetence—again, a kind of self-inflicted (autonomous) judgment: the bureaucratic suicide of the existing state.[153] But the problem still remains for reconstruction during the post-collapse era: *By what standard*? Whose sanctions will be enforced, God's or self-proclaimed autonomous man's?

The political theorists of the Enlightenment's right wing, most notably John Locke, lodged ultimate sovereignty in the individual. The right wing of the Enlightenment was therefore morally atomistic. This is the legacy of the Whig tradition. This philosophical individualism has greatly influenced Protestantism, especially Anglo-American Protestantism. Protestants do not feel comfortable with doctrines of corporate responsibility. The biblical doctrine of the covenant, especially the civil covenant, disturbs them. But without comprehensive biblical covenantalism, the state is freed from the restraints of biblical law and biblical sanctions. The church is then left to create a tenuous alliance with the family against the state. But the state, with its promise of endless money for education, health, and retirement, eventually lures away the support of families until the state finally goes bankrupt. In nations where the churches are funded by taxation, the allegiance of the churches to God is also compromised. This is why we need a doctrine of the covenant, with God's law at the center, and the with church as the primary counselor and therefore the primary institution. But this does not alter the primary locus of God-delegated authority in both church and state: the people, who are at greatest risk of God's historical sanctions. The purification offerings testified to this fact.

153. In Eastern (now Central) Europe in the final quarter of 1989, the collapse of Communist rule was in part an act of either treachery against Communism on the part of the ruler or else a highly risky deception of the West—Gorbachev, for whatever reasons, refused to send in the tanks—and in part the prayerful work of the national churches. In this revolt, the churches were recognized as the friends of the people, not the allies of the rulers and the targets of the revolution's rulers, as had been the case in the French and Russian revolutions.

5

PROPORTIONAL PAYMENTS TO GOD

And he shall bring his trespass offering unto the Lord for his sin which he hath sinned, a female from the flock, a lamb or a kid of the goats, for a sin offering; and the priest shall make an atonement for him concerning his sin. And if he be not able to bring a lamb, then he shall bring for his trespass, which he hath committed, two turtledoves, or two young pigeons, unto the Lord; one for a sin offering, and the other for a burnt offering.

LEVITICUS 5:6–7

But if he be not able to bring two turtledoves, or two young pigeons, then he that sinned shall bring for his offering the tenth part of an ephah of fine flour for a sin offering; he shall put no oil upon it, neither shall he put any frankincense thereon: for it is a sin offering. Then shall he bring it to the priest, and the priest shall take his handful of it, even a memorial thereof, and burn it on the altar, according to the offerings made by fire unto the Lord: it is a sin offering.

LEVITICUS 5:11–12

The theocentric principle that undergirds this law is God as a lawgiver and a sanctions-bringer. The offering covers the sin of a previous boundary transgression.

A. Purification Offerings

This passage extends the law of purification offerings. This was a special form of purification offering that applied to a specific kind of sin: a *sin of omission* (vv. 2–4). A sin of omission is a hidden sin. God sees it and judges it. Wenham wrote: "When the man starts to see the curse coming true, he feels guilty and then brings his offering."[1]

1. Gordon J. Wenham, *The Book of Leviticus* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1979), p. 100.

A purification offering was required to purify the tabernacle or the temple, so that the worshipper could enter into the presence of God. A burnt offering was the means of reconciling God and man through the sinner's re-dedication.[2] In the case of the turtledoves, one was for the purification offering, while the other was for the burnt offering.[3] Both the sinner and God's sanctified environment had to be cleansed.

Why was a female animal required? James Jordan argued that this was because "The animals represented Israelites in terms of their social or symbolic order." Laymen were regarded as the social brides of God, so their representative sacrifices had to be female.[4] This was a sign of their subordination.

The law granted to the one bringing a sacrifice the right to make a substitution: a less expensive animal for a more expensive animal, or meal for the less expensive animal. The word of the individual regarding his ability to pay was acceptable to the priest unless there was evidence to the contrary. This means that *self-government under God* was the operational assumption of the laws of sacrifice. God delegated considerable authority to the individual to decide how much he could afford to pay, even in the case of a violation of God's law by the individual, although a minor violation.

To understand why this substitution was allowed by God, despite its low price to the sacrificer, we must first recognize the principle of proportional payment to God. This means that we must first understand the tithe, for it is through the tithe that God announces the principle of proportional payment. I shall then move from a discussion of the tithe to a discussion of civil taxation. Then I shall return to the economics of this sacrifice. This is a roundabout excursion, but it is necessary if we are to grasp the underlying coherence of God's mandated economy. Modern man violated this economy throughout the twentieth century, and even conservative theologians have accepted—sometimes quite enthusiastically—the legitimacy of some of these violations.

B. The Taxation of Capital

What is important for purposes of economic analysis is the fact that this sacrifice to God was proportional to the wealth of the transgres-

2. *Ibid.*, p. 101.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 100. Birds were not used as guilt (reparation) offerings; the second passage therefore must be dealing with purification: *ibid.*, p. 104.

4. James Jordan, "The Whole Burnt Sacrifice: Its Liturgy and Meaning," *Biblical Horizons Occasional Paper*, No. 11, p. 2.

sor. Milgrom called this a graduated purification offering.[5] Because of the deliberately non-proportional nature of the modern income tax—those in higher income brackets pay a higher percentage of their income than those in lower brackets—the use of the term "graduated" is misleading. The required payment was proportional. This element of proportionality was analogous to God's required system of ecclesiastical financing: the tithe. The tithe to God is a fixed percentage—10%—of a person's net income from his labor or his net increase from investing. This percentage payment to the local church—and *only* to the local church[6]—was made under the Mosaic law on the basis of the increase that God gives to a rural land owner: "Thou shalt truly tithe all the increase of thy seed, that the field bringeth forth year by year" (Deut. 14:22).

There were cases in which God did require payment on gross income, irrespective of costs of production. One case was the firstfruits offering. Firstfruits was a tiny representative payment, small enough to be carried by a man who walked to Jerusalem. The cost of delivering this payment to the temple was vastly higher than the value of the firstfruits offering itself. Second, the poor were paid out of gross production when they gleaned. Third, a payment was required for the firstborn (Num. 18:15–17). Fourth, when the nation was numbered, all men over age 20 who were eligible to serve in the armed forces paid half a shekel to the priests (Ex. 30:12).[7] But these were either very small payments or infrequent. The major ecclesiastical tax, the tithe, was paid out of net income. In the New Covenant, only the tithe remains as a mandatory payment, so God no longer taxes capital, except in the sense that the sabbath principle must still be honored: forfeited income one day in seven.

Let us consider the case of a modern farmer. When a farmer begins his career, he has a stock of "after-tithe" seed corn. From this point on, when he saves the *same quantity* of seed corn from a harvest and plants

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5. Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, vol. 3 of *The Anchor Bible* (New York: Doubleday, 1991), p. 312.

6. The institutional church is a monopoly institution which alone can lawfully offer the sacraments and which alone collects the tithe on the basis of this sacramental monopoly. See Gary North, *Authority and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Exodus* (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, 2012), Part 3, *Tools of Dominion* (1990), ch. 58. Cf. Gary North, *Tithing and the Church* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1994), ch. 3. See Appendix B, below.

7. For a summary of these payments, see Alfred Edersheim, *The Temple: Its Ministry and Services As They Were in the Time of Jesus Christ* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, [1874] 1983), p. 379.

his next crop with it, there is no tithe required on the land's fruitful replacement of that original capital investment. Whatever quantity of seed and other inputs that it took to plant this season's crop is not subject to the tithe. So, if a farmer had to pay wages to his workers through the year, the tithe begins only after he has replaced the equivalent of the wages paid. God taxes only the increase on capital invested. Except for the previously listed payments, there was to be no taxation of gross income in Israel's economy; there should be none today.

This is true for the church's tithe; it is also true for the state.[8] Both church and state must be supported by proportional levies based on income rather than property. A farmer who makes no income in a bad year, but is instead forced to consume capital and borrow, is not to face the threat of the confiscation of his inheritance by either church officers or tax collectors merely because he holds legal title to land and equipment. The same objection applies to a head tax or a poll (voting) tax.[9] God's monopolistic ministries of church and state are to prosper economically only to the extent that their members do. God authorizes both church and state to tax success at a low, common, fixed rate, with the combined taxes of all branches of the state at less than the tithe (I Sam. 8:15, 17). Neither institution is authorized to tax the capital that makes success possible.

1. Off the Top

God is entitled a tithe on our net productivity. His share comes "off the top." But the modern state in many cases demands this initial payment, leaving the church with a tithe on whatever remains. This is wicked but common. In the United States, the taxpayer is allowed to deduct payments to charitable organizations before the United States government assesses an income tax on whatever remains. But this is not the case with the Social Security (old age pension) payroll tax, which is euphemistically called a contribution. The United States government collects its tax on total wage income—no deductions allowed. Most nations fail to grant tax deductions for donations.

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8. R. J. Rushdoony, *The Institutes of Biblical Law* (Nutley, New Jersey: Craig Press, 1973), p. 283.

9. God did not impose a head tax. North, *Authority and Dominion*, ch. 58. In the fall of 1990, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher of England was forced to resign from her position by her own political party. The Conservative Party had suffered a serious decline in popularity as a result of decision to add a kind of head tax to the existing property tax. (Had she not strongly opposed England's entry into the European Community, she might have retained her office.)

The question arises: Does the Christian owe God a tithe on his pre-tax net income? He does if the state does not collect the tax first. But if the state collects the money "off the top" and does not allow the taxpayer to deduct his tithe payments from his gross income before estimating his income tax obligation, the answer is clear: the tithe is 10% of whatever remains after the tax collector has collected the state's immorally extracted tax. The state has stolen from God: sacrilege. This is not the tithe-payer's responsibility. He is a victim. If the tithe-payer had to pay a tithe on his pre-tax income, God would be taxing what the tithe-payer never received. This would constitute a tax on capital. Put another way, God does not tax us on that portion of our net crop that the locusts eat. Tax collectors are the economic equivalent of locusts.

On the other hand, if the state allows us to deduct our tithe payments before it computes our taxable income, we owe the tithe on our pre-tax income. God should always get paid first. If a man takes in a hundred ounces of gold a year, net, and he pays his tithe, the state should tax him on the remaining 90 ounces. If it collects a tax equal to the tithe—immoral (I Sam. 8:17)—it receives 9 ounces. An even more immoral state will collect 10 ounces, leaving the tithe-payer with 90 ounces of gold after taxes. He then pays 9 ounces to the church. In both examples, he retains 81 ounces. In the first example, the church collects 10 ounces and the state collects 9; in the second example, it is the reverse. The first example is closer to God's standards than the second.

2. Sharecropping

We can understand this better if we think of the pre-twentieth-century agricultural practice of sharecropping. Land owners owned land and capital. (Capital is the product of land and labor over time).[10] After slavery was abolished, they no longer owned people. Instead, they hired people.[11] Rather than paying them wages, land owners leased to sharecroppers tools and land. Owners concluded that it was less expensive to monitor economic results—a local crop—than it was to monitor the productivity of their employees' labor inputs to the

10. Murray N. Rothbard, *Man, Economy, and State: A Treatise on Economic Principles*, 2nd ed. (Auburn, Alabama: Mises Institute, [1962] 2009), ch. 5:4.

11. In the American South, 1865–80, sharecropping became a way of life for ex-slaves and ex-slave owners. It was a cost-effective system for a defeated post-war society with minimal financial capital. Roger Ransom and Richard Sutch, *One Kind of Freedom: The economic consequences of emancipation* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977).

production process, requiring them to specify a wage for these labor inputs.[12] What mattered to land owners was results, not labor inputs. They understood: "Activity is no substitute for production."

Hourly wages are based on the average productivity of a particular class of workers. An above-average producer in any given class is usually much better off to become a sharecropper, a piece-rate worker, or a commissioned salesman. He is paid in terms of his measurable net productivity, not in terms of his membership in a class of laborers. The lower the percentage of the crop owed contractually to the owner, the better this arrangement is for the efficient producer. To gain the services of such workers, owners are willing to take a lower percentage of the crop: a smaller percentage of a much larger pie.

God is the owner; covenant-keepers are His sharecroppers as household priests. He does not tax capital today for the same reason that the land owner does not tax his own land and tools. They are being used by the sharecroppers to produce a crop. The land owner collects a fixed percentage of the crop after the replacement of seed and tools. So does God. God demands a low percentage of our net output—10% to the church;[13] less than 10% to the state (I Sam. 8:14–18)[14]—in order to encourage us to work efficiently. He does not have to monitor our inputs except for prohibiting our labor one day a week. He authorizes His agents, meaning ordained ministers (church and state), to monitor our net output and collect God's mandated share.

This system of taxation is appropriate to a decentralized economic order. It is consistent with God's system of representative government. God's kingdom, unlike Satan's, is not a top-down commonwealth. God delegates tremendous authority and responsibility to the individual. He treats us as sharecroppers: people who are responsible for final results, not bureaucratic wage-earners. This structure of ownership and taxation is why a Christian social order should reward economic growth rather than time-serving. God as the owner is paid in terms of our net productivity, not a fixed tax. We sharecroppers keep the lion's share of our crop: above 80% in a society that honors

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12. The cost of monitoring people's behavior is fundamental in the evolution of economic and political institutions. Thomas Sowell, *Knowledge and Decisions* (New York: Basic Books, 1980), pp. 55–56, 65–66, 111–12, 215–26. See Sowell's index for more entries: "Monitoring."

13. Gary North, *The Covenantal Tithe* (Powder Springs, Georgia: American Vision, 2011).

14. Gary North, *Disobedience and Defeat: An Economic Commentary on the Historical Books* (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, 2012), ch. 14.

God's law. The twentieth century did not honor it. It suffered wars, taxation, inflation, regulation, and socialist impoverization as its appropriate reward. God is not mocked.

C. Costs of Ownership

What this means is that God has assigned the ownership of most property to individuals, families, business partnerships, and corporations. These *profit-seeking* economic agents act in God's behalf as stewards. Their God-assigned, market-driven task is to increase the productivity, and therefore the market value, of the property under their lawful management. This is the economic process of *adding value*. God allows men to retain 90%of the pre-tax increase that their efforts produce.[15] He requires a tithe as a means of sustaining the work of His institutional church, but also as a token (representative) sacrifice to Him by His stewards: the public mark of their subordination to Him. As in the case of the first sacrifice listed in Leviticus, God must be paid first—men's public acknowledgment of His absolute sovereignty—but not paid very much: the sign of our inability to buy His favor with our own wealth.[16] Paying the tithe is man's public denial of his own autonomy.

God's long-term economic goal is to use the tithe-financed expansion of His church to bring the whole earth under His public authority through the extension of private, tithe-paying ownership. He is *redeeming* (buying back) the earth *in history*. The extension of private, tithe-paying ownership is God's authorized *and required* means of enabling His people's reclaiming title to the land—land that was previously appropriated in history by Satan through Satan's successful covenantal subordination of Adam and Eve.[17] Each self-proclaimed

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15. A godly civil government does not impose income taxes on money given to charity. It taxes income only after tithe payments have been made to a church. But some civil governments are perverse. They tax gross income before the individual or the business gives away money. In such societies, men are not required to tithe on what the tax collector has already appropriated. If this were not the case, then God would be taxing capital. For example, if the state collects 100% of a person's income, for God to extract an additional 10% would involve the taxation of capital. God does not tax capital; He taxes only the increase. He does not tax what the "locusts" eat before the harvest.

16. Chapter 1.

17. Amillennialists categorically deny that God's redemption of the earth will take place historically. This is the heart of their position. Gary North, *Millennialism and Social Theory* (Tyler, Texas Institute for Christian Economics, 1990), chaps. 4, 9. In fact, they even say that Satan's subordinates will reclaim most of what pathetically little Christ has transferred to His people since His ascension. Nevertheless, amillennialists

sovereign master of the universe, God and Satan, exercises ownership representatively. Each claims ownership of the earth. Each establishes *ownership boundaries* that are to be defended by his covenantal subordinates.

1. Private Ownership

Why does God assign ownership primarily to profit-seeking private owners? Because it is *only* through the private ownership of the means of production, especially capital assets, that it becomes possible to count the costs of operation. Without private ownership, there cannot be competitive pricing. Without market-established prices, especially prices for capital goods, there cannot be rational accounting. All economic allocations made under socialist ownership are inherently irrational, a fact proven theoretically by Ludwig von Mises as early as 1920[18] and revealed to the world publicly in 1989 with the public acknowledgment by Soviet Premier Gorbachev of the utter collapse of the Communist economies.[19] Mises for decades was not believed by Western intellectuals, including economists.[20] They much preferred to believe the utopian promises of socialist dictators. They still generally refuse to acknowledge the accuracy of Mises' theoretical case.[21] Robert Heilbroner, a socialist who made millions of dollars from his bestselling book on the great economists, did admit in 1990 that Mises had been correct after all, that his generation had been completely wrong on this point, and socialism as an ideal is dead

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should be willing to acknowledge that this process of redeeming the earth is God's economic goal for His people, even if Christians fail to achieve it in history.

18. Ludwig von Mises, "Economic Calculation in the Socialist Commonwealth" (1920); in F. A. Hayek (ed.), *Collectivist Economic Planning* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, [1935] 1953), ch. 3; the essay was reprinted by the Mises Institute, Auburn, Alabama, in 1990. Cf. Hayek, *Individualism and Economic Order* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, [1948] 1949), chaps 7–9; T. J. B. Hoff, *Economic Calculation on the Socialist Society* (London: Hodge, 1949); Don Lavoie, *National Economic Planning: What Is Left?* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Ballinger, 1985).

19. I know of no equally monumental and rapid shift in public opinion, including academic opinion, in the history of Western thought. Virtually overnight—1988–89—Communism as an economic system lost its defenders except those with academic tenure in American universities. Only when the chief Soviet Communist admitted publicly that Communist economic planning had totally failed did the West's intellectuals at last accept the proposition that Communism does not work.

20. Oscar Lange and Fred M. Taylor, *On the Economic Theory of Socialism* (New York: McGraw-Hill, [1938] 1965).

21. Mises was equally hostile to "middle of the road" socialism, which the intellectuals have yet to abandon. See Mises, "Middle-of-the-Road Policy Leads to Socialism," in Ludwig von Mises, *Planning for Freedom*, 3rd ed. (South Holland, Illinois, [1950] 1974.

unless it can come to power through the ecology movement, which he still hoped will happen.[22] This admission came late and under extreme duress: the collapse of Soviet Communism. Mises was not mentioned once in Heilbroner's book, but there was room for chapters on the utopian socialists, on Karl Marx, and on Thorstein Veblen.[23] It was only when the tyrants who ruled the Communist slave state known as the Soviet Union publicly admitted the total economic failure of Soviet Communism[24] that Western intellectuals began to parrot these critical views, although without understanding the theoretical case behind the reality. Prior to this overnight shift in the Communist Party line, Western intellectuals had steadfastly defended both socialism and Communism as valid economic systems. This included the vast majority of academic economists.[25] Intellectuals are like sheep; they move in herds, with a handful of skilled sheep dogs keeping them moving. From time to time these sheep get sheared by reality; in totalitarian societies, they get slaughtered by tyrants.

To be successful in a free market, resource owners must steadily increase the economic value of their assets' *customer-satisfying* output. They must also keep down the costs of operation. This forces owners to *count the cost* of their actions—a biblical injunction (Luke 14:28–30).[26] Through private ownership of the means of production,

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22. Robert Heilbroner, "Reflections: After Communism," *New Yorker* (Sept. 10, 1990), pp. 92, 100. This is not an academic journal; it is a magazine aimed at intellectuals.

23. Robert Heilbroner, *The Worldly Philosophers* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1953).

24. "Gorbachev Calls for a Strike Ban, Saying Economy Is Near Collapse," *New York Times* (Oct. 3, 1989).

25. The best example is Paul Samuelson, the first American to win the Nobel Prize in economics (1970). In the 13th edition of his best-selling textbook, published in 1989, he wrote: "The Soviet economy is proof that, contrary to what many skeptics had earlier believed, a socialist command economy can function and even thrive." Paul A. Samuelson and William D. Nordhaus, *Economics* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1989), p. 837. Mark Skousen's study of the ten major American economics textbooks in the late 1980s reports that several of them "are surprisingly sympathetic toward Karl Marx, the ideological founder of modern socialism." Mark Skousen, *Economics on Trial: Lies, Myths, and Realities* (Homewood, Illinois: Business One Irwin, 1991), p. 208. He said also that "Most of the top 10 textbook writers accept the conventional view that the Soviet Union and other countries with command economies have achieved a highly developed stage based on accepted GNP statistics." *Ibid*., p. 213. Textbooks rapidly become almost worthless because publishers require authors to update them every three years to destroy competition from used textbooks, which are rarely kept by students after final exams. But late-1980s economics textbooks may become collector items, for they document the incomparable foolishness of their authors regarding socialism and Communism.

26. Gary North, *Treasure and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Luke*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press,, [2000] 2012), ch. 35.

those who make mistakes in allocating producer goods to meet expected consumer demand are the people who bear the cost of their own actions. The dominion covenant is therefore accomplished progressively over time through *profit-driven economic growth*. Through private ownership of the means of production, more and more of this world's abundant resources are brought under the control of mankind.[27] Entrepreneurs continually seek out ways to satisfy consumer demand without proportionately increasing the consumption of capital and therefore the proportionate destruction of capital value. The whole world becomes a potential capital asset. By discovering new ways to satisfy buyers, producers raise the value of God's creation. This is exactly what God requires from His stewards (Matt. 25:14–30).[28] Again, this is the process known as *value-added production*. Man's efforts add value to the resources that God has provided for him. It is human creativity, therefore, not raw materials, that is the creation's most important scarce resource.[29] But this is derived by God's grace (Deut. 8:16–18). Economic growth is the dominion covenant in action, the fulfilling of Adam's original task to dress the garden and guard it.

2. Voluntarism vs. Compulsion

For the church or the state to interfere with this value-adding expansionist economic program by confiscating privately owned capital—as distinguished from taxing the net economic fruits of capital at low rates—is to interfere with the God-assigned task of dominion. Neither the church nor the state is a profit-seeking institution; both are God-ordained monopolies that are supposed to be financed by a fixed percentage of the net economic increase that God gives to His people, i.e., the principle of the tithe.

The tithe principle's restriction—no consumption of existing capital—applies only to compulsory wealth transfers. To consume voluntarily one's existing capital assets at any rate above zero is to reduce future economic growth; it is to consume one's tools of dominion. It is legal in God's eyes to do this, but it does impose costs: reduced opportunities to increase future wealth through profitable investing. The owner-consumer will pay the price in the forfeited future income

27. Julian L. Simon and Herman Kahn (eds.), *The Resourceful Earth: A Response Global 2000* (London: Basil Blackwell, 1984).

28. North, *Authority and Dominion*, ch. 49:M.

29. Julian L. Simon, *The Ultimate Resource* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1981).

that the capital might have produced. There is therefore an element of *negative feedback* in this private property system. The present beneficiary knows that he or his heirs risk suffering a reduced level of future income if he consumes capital today. He has an incentive to refrain from consuming his capital base.

To consume other people's capital assets by moral or legal compulsion is also to impede the fulfillment of the dominion covenant. Worse, it encourages private owners to consume them before the tax collectors arrive.[30] The threat of confiscation changes the private owner's view of the future, including his personal responsibility for the future. The taxation of capital transfers assets from those agents who are production-oriented to political institutions that are inherently present-oriented and consumption-oriented, and which, because they are monopolies, are insulated from the free market pressures of consumer choice. Those people who act as capital confiscators are immediately enriched; they increase their control over scarce economic resources. Those who are God's assigned stewards of capital suffer immediate economic losses—the reduction of their present wealth—as well as any forfeited future productivity that the confiscated capital might have provided, if it had been put to consumer-satisfying uses. Those who bear the costs—capital owners—are not those who benefit from the wealth transfer. Thus, there is very little visible negative economic feedback on the state's consumption of capital. There is only political negative feedback.

Any monopolistic institution that compels the transfer of capital is a seed-corn-eating institution. It is inherently present-oriented. It is a *lower-class* institution.[31] It is an institution that fosters a short-run view of time and human decision-making (high time preference, high interest rates) rather than a long-run view of time and decision-making (low time preference, low interest rates).[32]

D. The Ability to Pay

All sin is an affront to God. The rich man's sin as well as the poor man's sin enrages God. But there is this distinction: the rich man has

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30. This is what happened in the Soviet Union in the early 1930s during Stalin's forced collectivization of agriculture. Peasants slaughtered their animals and ate them rather than turn them over to the new collective farms and state farms.

31. Edward C. Banfield, *The Unheavenly City: The Nature and Future of Our Urban Crisis* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1970), ch. 3.

32. T. Alexander Smith, *Time and Public Policy* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1988), chaps. 4–6.

sinned in the face of greater blessings from God. He therefore owes more to God than the poor man does in absolute terms. Making restitution to God is supposed to hurt, but one man's economic pain is another man's economic destruction. Thus, sinners are to make restitution to God in terms of the proportional benefits they expected to gain from their sin.

1. Wealth and Responsibility

A fundamental biblical principle is invoked at this point: *from him to whom much is given, much is expected*. The context of this rule is the imposition of God's eternal sanctions.

> And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath. But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken; The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers. And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more (Luke 12:42–48).[33]

If this system of proportional sanctions is true throughout eternity, then it surely must be true in terms of the restitution payments in history owed to God by men. Marx's principle of expectation and economic remuneration is therefore wrong: "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs!"[34] The first half of the statement is correct; the second half is true only in the case of the physically or mentally incompetent, or those who in the England were for centuries called "the deserving poor."[35] The general rule is this: "To each according to market value of his *actual production*." We know this from the parable: "And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and

33. North, *Treasure and Dominion*, ch. 28.

34. Karl Marx, *The Critique of the Gotha Program* (1875); in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works*, 3 vols. (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1969), III, p. 19. Marx stole this phrase from Morelly's *Code de la Nature* (1755–60).

35. Peter Mathias, *The First Industrial Nation: An Economic History of Britain, 1700–1914* (New York: Scribner's, 1969), p. 26.

wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath" (Luke 12:42–44).

2. Misused Slogans

The slogan, "the ability to pay," throughout the twentieth century was used by politicians to justify taxation policies that extract widely differing percentages of men's income as taxes. Sales taxes, "sin" taxes (cigarettes and liquor), luxury taxes, and property taxes were imposed by means of a fixed percentage of the sales price or estimated value. Income, in contrast, is taxed at varying rates the rates escalate as the income level rises.[36] The graduated or "progressive" income tax is not a proportional system of taxation but rather a system of *disproportional* taxation. "Paying one's fair share" is a slogan used mainly by those policy-makers who plan to use state coercion to see to it that they themselves—or at least their political constituents[37]—pay a lower percentage of their income to the state than others do, especially their main political opponents. The word *fair* is never defined. The politicians and their ideological apologists appeal to the envy of those who believe they are poorer. Envy justifies the extraction of a higher proportion of income from those they perceive as richer.[38] This policy is a consistent application of the socialist's version of the eighth commandment: "Thou shalt not steal, except by majority vote."

The ludicrousness of such a view—that a graduated income tax is consistent with the biblical principle of the ability to pay—can be seen in the recommendation of Protestant liberation theologian Ronald Sider. Sider called for a *graduated tithe*. But the biblical tithe is 10%. The term "graduated tithe" leads to both terminological and conceptual confusion between the mandatory tithe, which is owed to

36. This also applies to "death duties," meaning inheritance taxes.

37. A rich politician may very well promote a high progressive income tax if he has his money invested in nontaxable wealth, or if he derives more pleasure from being re-elected by envious voters than from spending his income. This is why the very rich are so often socialists or dedicated Keynesians their wealth is in real estate, trusts, or tax-exempt bonds, and they have so much money already—especially inherited wealth—that they find it more gratifying to wield political power than to retain another million in after-tax income. Show me a multi-millionaire who inherited all of his money from Daddy or Grandpa, and I will show you a politician dangerous to both political and economic freedom.

38. Gary North, "The Politics of the Fair Share," *The Freeman* (Nov. 1993).

the institutional church, and voluntary offerings above the tithe. His recommended system is this: the more income a person makes, the higher the incremental percentage of his giving should be. But, he hastened to add, "Obviously it is not the only useful model. Certainly it is not a biblical norm to be prescribed legalistically for others."[39] So, what Sider recommended is not really a tithe; it is a recommended but not compulsory system of offerings.

There is a hidden problem here, however. Sider repeatedly called on the church to become the model for the world.[40] This means the political world. But the political world is governed by compulsory taxation, not by the church's system of morally mandatory tithes and voluntary offerings, let alone the "give whatever the Spirit leads" system of antinomian giving.[41] When, in our 1981 debate, I challenged Sider twice to name the percentage of one's income above which the state cannot morally extract, he twice refused to suggest a figure.[42] The answer, Samuel tells us, is something under 10%, i.e., the tithe; anything as high as the tithe is political tyranny (I Sam. 8:15, 17). Even this level of taxation would drastically shrink the modern state,[43] but men like Sider have no intention of shrinking the modern state. On the contrary, their demands for social justice can be met only be a vast expansion of the state and taxes.[44] Sider's views shifted dramatically in his 1997 edition, half a decade after the collapse of the Soviet Union. He became more moderate and guarded in his critique of capitalism. He even adopted some of Chilton's arguments. But nowhere in the book is any reference to *Productive Christians in an Age of Guilt-Manipulators*. He blacked out Chilton.

39. Ronald J. Sider, *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger: A Biblical Study* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1977), p. 175. Sider abandoned this concept in the twentieth-year anniversary version of this book. Cf. Gary North, "The Economic Re-Education of Ronald J. Sider," Gary North, *Inheritance and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Deuteronomy*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Five Point Press, [1999] 2012), Appendix F.

40. *Ibid*., pp. 98, 111, 170.

41. If you give under 10% to your local church, you are breaking God's law. On the other hand, if you do not know what God's maximum *required* percentage is, you may feel guilty when giving 30%.

42. This debate took place at Gordon-Conwell School of Theology. Audiotape cassettes of this debate are available from Covenant Media Foundation.

43. The average rate of overall taxation in most modern nations is about 40% from 33% in the U. S. to 50% in Sweden. Joseph A. Pechman (ed.), *Comparative Tax Systems Europe, Canada, and Japan* (Arlington, Virginia: Tax Analysts, 1987), p. 1.

44. David Chilton, *Productive Christians in an Age of Guilt-Manipulators A Biblical Response to Ronald J. Sider*, 3rd ed. (Tyler, Texas Institute for Christian Economics, [1986] 1990).

E. Discontinuities of Sacrifice

When men were required by God to sacrifice animals as substitutes, the priests faced a problem: How were the required restitution payments to correspond with the sinner's ability to pay? When the tithe was owed, this payment could be estimated easily: so many pieces of silver or so many units of grain. It could also be done in terms of so many animals. "And concerning the tithe of the herd, or of the flock, even of whatsoever passeth under the rod, the tenth shall be holy unto the Lord. He shall not search whether it be good or bad, neither shall he change it and if he change it at all, then both it and the change thereof shall be holy; it shall not be redeemed" (Lev. 27:32–33). The animals would be lined up randomly and passed under a rod; every tenth animal was culled out of the flock to be given to the Lord. If a man saw that a favorite animal was lost to this procedure, he could redeem it by paying its market value plus 20% (Lev. 27:31). If he in any way tampered with the lining-up process, he could not subsequently redeem the animal. Thus, God created risks for tampering with the flock; if the herdsman miscalculated in his prohibited calculations, he could lose a cherished animal.[45]

The animal sacrifice system created a problem that did not exist to the same degree in the case of the tithe. A tithe was proportional to net increase. A net increase could be measured or at least estimated fairly well. But offering an animal sacrifice was not the same as paying God a fixed proportion of net income. A specific kind of sin required a specific sacrifice. The nature of the sin determined the nature of the sacrifice. Then how could God maintain the principle of *proportional pain*? Had the sacrifice been a specified amount of money, either the rich man would have paid too little proportional to his economic benefits in life or the poor man would have paid too much. The penalty would not have been proportional.

There is no way to sacrifice one-third of an animal without killing it. This is the problem of *sacrificial discontinuity*. Thus, proportional restitution to God is not possible in a world that requires a single type of animal sacrifice. If killing a lamb or goat is the only legitimate way to placate God, then both the rich man and the poor man have to pay it. But this would violate the biblical principle of greater responsibility on the part of those possessing greater wealth.

The problem of sacrificial discontinuity is reflected in the specified

45. Chapter 37.

sacrificial animals in Leviticus 5: lambs or goats, a pair of birds,[46] or fine flour and oil. The payment for sin to God (as distinguished from an earthly victim) was not to be made in terms of money, except by someone who was willing to pay an extra 20% to buy back (redeem) the animal. The wealth (capital) of the sinner was to determine which animal he was to sacrifice, or even if he was to sacrifice an animal. The poor man could legitimately sacrifice fine flour and still meet the judicial requirement, but the sacrifice had to impose pain on the sinner. The sacrifice was to reflect or represent the intensity of the negative sanction he was avoiding, on earth and in eternity.

F. Rich Man, Average Man, Poor Man

The tripartite division that we commonly make in class analysis—upper, middle, and lower—is reflected in this passage. The idea that each wealth group was bound by differing ritual obligations pointed to the biblical principle of *present obligations* in terms of *prior benefits*. If the rich man imagined that he could escape God's condemnation by the payment of a trifle, he did not understand God's analysis of the nature of the specific infraction. The earthly restitution payment to God was to be a token of the required eternal payment, what Paul called an *earnest* (Eph. 1:14), meaning a down payment. God promises to inflict great pain for sin in eternity; the pain endured by sinners in history is to reflect this coming pain. The sanctions of Israel's sacrificial system were designed to teach this lesson before it was too late for repentance.

On the other hand, had the poor man been expected to pay a rich man's obligation, he would have lost sight of the reality of differing sins: any sin would bankrupt him. Such a restitution system would economically subsidize the worst sins by poor people. Why not commit really serious infractions if the end result in history is the same for great and minor infractions, i.e., bankruptcy and enslavement? To impose an impossibly high penalty on all crimes or sins is to make it equally expensive to commit all crimes or all sins. Man being what he is—totally depraved apart from God's grace—this system of sanctions would be a subsidy to his depraved nature. It would be comparable to imposing the death penalty for murdering a policeman and also for stealing a bicycle. It would result in extreme danger for any policeman attempting to arrest a bicycle thief. The thief would know that killing the policeman would not result in any greater earthly pen-

46. One for a purification offering and the other for a burnt offering: Wenham, *Leviticus*, p. 100.

alty. This assessment of comparative risk would eventually lead to very high expenses for the arrest of suspected bicycle thieves. Squads of police would have to be allocated to the arrest every suspected bicycle thief. Meanwhile, someone calling the police department's emergency phone number in order to stop a murder might find that there were very few police left to respond; too many of them would be assigned to arresting some armed and dangerous bicycle thief.

G. Interpersonal Comparisons of Subjective Utility

My interpretation of this law returns to an issue raised by economist A. C. Pigou in the early years of the twentieth century. In his book, *The Economics of Welfare* (1912), Pigou offered a scientific justification of the graduated income tax. He argued that one additional monetary unit of income for a rich man meant little to him compared to what that same monetary unit of income would mean to a very poor man. Therefore, a net increase in aggregate social utility could be attained by taxing the income of rich men at rates higher than those imposed on poor men. This argument has persuaded many economists. But in 1932, Lionel Robbins challenged it in his book, *The Nature and Significance of Economic Science*. He insisted that we cannot, as scientists, make interpersonal comparisons of other men's subjective utility. Scientifically, no one can say what value a rich man places on an additional unit of income compared to a poor man's valuation. There is no common scale of psychic valuation. Scientifically, he was correct. No economist has ever refuted this objection.

I have surveyed this theoretical problem elsewhere.[47] We are not dealing here with scientific economic policy. We are dealing with a law established by an omniscient God who is fully capable of making interpersonal comparisons of every person's subjective utility. Second, the right to substitute a less expensive animal applied only to the purification offering. The principle of the tithe is simple to state: a fixed percentage paid by all income recipients. Proportional payment—the judicial principle of the tithe—also underlies this sacrifice. But one animal, unlike grain or money income, cannot be precisely divided proportionately without killing it. Nevertheless, this law does honor the proportional principle. Thus, it would be analytically perverse to use the law governing this sacrifice to defend a graduated income tax.

47. Gary North, *Sovereignty and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Genesis* (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [1982] 2012), ch. 5; North, *Authority and Dominion*, Appendix J:E–F; North, *Treasure and Dominion*, ch. 50.

Conclusion

The Bible teaches the principle of proportional tithing and proportional restitution to God. The problem with animal sacrifices in the Old Covenant was that they could not be precisely proportional: men cannot slay just half an animal. Thus, God imposed a system of different sacrifices for people of varying wealth.

The priests collected the sacrifices, and they could lawfully use them personally: "And the priest shall make an atonement for him as touching his sin that he hath sinned in one of these, and it shall be forgiven him: and the remnant shall be the priest's, as a meat offering" (Lev. 5:13). But these sacrifices were not part of a predictable stream of income. These payments were the result of specific sins. These penalties were not based on income but on the sinner's total wealth; they were specific restitution payments. They were the economic equivalent of sin taxes—*literal* sin taxes to God through His church. This system enabled men to reduce these sin taxes by sinning less frequently.

The market value of these sacrifices was limited by the wealth of the sinner. This was to make certain that every sinner felt the appropriate pain of economic loss; it would remind him of the eternal loss to come. There were "different strokes for different folks" only to make sure that all the folks felt an appropriate degree of economic pain. Had the sacrificial system been strictly a system of fines, the proportionality of the sanctions would have been easy to maintain. Because a living animal is not divisible on the same basis as monetary fines, God established a system of differing sacrifices for the same transgression, so that all transgressors were to feel a similar psychological burden for their transgressions irrespective of their net worth.

6

SACRED, PROFANE, AND COMMON

And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, If a soul commit a trespass, and sin through ignorance, in the holy things of the LORD; then he shall bring for his trespass unto the LORD a ram without blemish out of the flocks, with thy estimation by shekels of silver, after the shekel of the sanctuary, for a trespass offering: And he shall make amends for the harm that he hath done in the holy thing, and shall add the fifth part thereto, and give it unto the priest: and the priest shall make an atonement for him with the ram of the trespass offering, and it shall be forgiven him. And if a soul sin, and commit any of these things which are forbidden to be done by the commandments of the LORD; though he wist it not [unaware], yet is he guilty, and shall bear his iniquity. And he shall bring a ram without blemish out of the flock, with thy estimation, for a trespass offering, unto the priest: and the priest shall make an atonement for him concerning his ignorance wherein he erred and wist it not, and it shall be forgiven him. It is a trespass offering: he hath certainly trespassed against the LORD.

LEVITICUS 5:14–19

The theocentric meaning of this passage is that there are varying degrees of sin in trespassing God's boundaries. This law governs the transgression of a sacred boundary, which profanes sacred space.

A. A Trespass Offering

Some sins are committed in ignorance. The two greatest sins in history were committed by some of the participants in ignorance: the Fall of man—Eve was ignorant (I Tim. 2:13b)—and the crucifixion of Christ: the Roman soldiers were ignorant (Luke 23:34). Nevertheless, ignorance is no defense. Reparation for transgression is still necessary.

This is the fifth sacrifice: a guilt (reparation) offering.[1] As the fifth offering, it was associated with point five of the biblical covenant model: succession or inheritance. It had to do with *continuity*. To be restored to the legal status that he had enjoyed before the transgression, the trespasser had to offer a sacrifice. The transgression had been individual. The judicial implication of the passage is this: the sanctions God would apply to the transgressor would be personal, not corporate. His sin was not representational. He had transgressed a holy thing or a holy commandment. Thus, the appropriate institutional sanction was ecclesiastical: excommunication. This would cause him to lose his inheritance in Israel: his land, but more important, his citizenship.[2] To continue as a free man in Israel—to leave an inheritance to his children—he had to offer a sacrifice.

A 20% penalty was applied to a transgression of a holy thing. Not so with a transgression of one of God's commandments. Here is the theological question: Why the difference?

The King James translators translated the Hebrew word *'asham* as *trespass*. The English word "trespass" is readily associated with a boundary violation, as in "No Trespassing." The New American Standard Bible translates *'asham* as *guilt*. So did the medieval Jewish commentator Nachmanides.[3] Grammatically, this is the more precise translation. What is described here is a guilt offering. A person in ignorance commits a transgression of God's law, later recognizes this infraction, and then offers sacrifice to pay for his transgression. He recognizes his own guilt, and he then offers a sacrifice as his acknowledgment. Nevertheless, the King James Version comes closer to the theological meaning of the type of transgression involved: a trespass—a boundary violation—in the same sense that Adam's sin involved a transgression of the judicial boundary which God had placed around the forbidden fruit. Adam and Eve were indeed guilty, but their guilt was based on a literal trespass.

Adam's trespass remains the archetype of all sin. Eve's transgression, however, was closer to the sin covered by this passage: one committed in ignorance. Paul wrote: "And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression" (I Tim. 2:14). Representatively, she was under Adam's jurisdiction, so she came

1. Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, vol. 3 of *The Anchor Bible* (New York: Doubleday, 1991), p. 319.

2. Chapter 31.

3. Ramban [Rabbi Moshe ben Nachman], *Commentary on the Torah: Leviticus* (New York: Shilo, [1250s?] 1974), p. 55.

under Adam's more comprehensive judgment: death. But God distinguished between the two degrees of sin, so He imposed separate sanctions. Eve's punishment was pain in childbearing (Gen. 3:16): an occasional event. Adam's punishment was to sweat daily as he worked to subdue a world now filled with resisting thorns and weeds (Gen. 3:17–19).[4] Mankind as a species is defined by the work of dominion (Gen. 1:26–28), but the male's labor is more closely associated with this task; the woman's is more closely associated with assisting her husband and extending the human race.[5] She comes under the general curse primarily through her judicially subordinate position.

B. Holy Things and Holy Commandments

This passage rests on a distinction between holy things of the Lord and holy commandments. A transgression of *holy things* in ignorance required a 20% penalty plus the offering of a ram (vv. 15–16). In contrast, a transgression of *a commandment* in ignorance required only the sacrifice of the animal (v. 18). This seemingly minor distinction becomes the basis of the analysis of the present long and highly detailed chapter—specifically, acknowledging the biblical distinction between the sacred and the common, but denying the legitimacy of a far more widely accepted distinction: *sacred vs. profane*. As we shall

4. The technological progress of man in history has begun to overcome God's curses. Air conditioning is one such example. Today, air conditioning in most of the industrial world has overcome the literal application of this negative sanction. (The cultural substitute has been stress, a kind of internalized sweating.) This progress can be seen as a blessing: greater rewards in response to progressive obedience to the external principles of responsible private ownership and the social and intellectual division of labor. It can also be seen as a prelude to widespread cursing following a collapse of the social division of labor as a result of war, terrorism, or mass inflation.

5. Judicially, the New Testament's sanction of baptism has broken down the middle wall of partition between male and female. "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:27–28). Thus, Paul wrote immediately following his discussion of Eve's transgression, "Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety" (I Tim. 2:15). The progressive removal of Eve's Genesis sanction indicates that under the New Covenant, women will progressively work more closely with men in the broader tasks of dominion, thereby breaking down the occupational division of labor. We find that as the division of labor has been extended since the Industrial Revolution of the 1780s, women have found employment in salary-earning occupations—tasks other than household services—although they still tend to fill those jobs that are traditionally male-support jobs. There are very few male secretaries, especially serving female executives. Women still leave the work force to rear children in greater numbers than men do. Felice N. Schwartz, *Breaking With Tradition: Women and Work, The New Facts of Life* (New York: Warner, 1992), ch. 3.

see, one of the most serious errors that has resulted from a misunderstanding of the biblical categories of sacred, common, and profane is the false distinction between what is sometimes called full-time Christian service and secular employment. Full-time Christian service is regarded as sacred; secular employment is seen as common when not actually profane. This theological confusion has led to the retreat of Christians from leadership in the arts, industry, and most other fields. I shall deal with this subject in greater detail later in this chapter.

Protestant Christians have generally been far more concerned about violations of God's ethical commands than His ritual boundaries. They rarely concern themselves with the crime of sacrilege, which was the ultimate sin of Adam.[6] Part of their lack of concern is legitimate: the sacred spaces of the Mosaic covenant ended definitively with the death of Jesus and finally with the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. But part of their lack of concern is illegitimate, such as their denial of any national covenant in the New Covenant era and their downplaying (or outright denial) of the judicial aspect of the sacraments.

Under the Mosaic Covenant, however, things were very different. An inadvertent violation of God's commands was settled by paying the victim whatever he had lost as a result of the transgression. The ethical transgression covered by this law must have been a transgression of one of God's verbal boundaries; no human victim is identified here. God did not impose a 20% payment in addition to the sacrifice of a ram for the violation of a commandment (Lev. 5:17–18). But when someone violated a sacred space or sacred object, he violated God's word (the law) as well as the actual thing or space (Lev. 5:15–16). *The transgression was a double boundary violation: word and place.* The penalty was therefore greater.

C. Sacred Boundaries

There is so much confusion over the relationship between the sacred and the common that interpreters have tended to misrepresent the relationship. *They have confused the common with the profane.* This false interpretation has undermined Christian social and ethical theory whenever it has appeared. It makes the common appear as if it were a realm "naturally" opposed to grace and ultimately beyond grace—legitimately so in history. *This places a boundary around grace.* The interpreters have not understood that every created thing begins as com-

6. Chapter 4:C.

mon and remains common unless judicially sanctified: actively set apart by God or His law. Nothing begins as profane; it must *become* profane, just as something becomes sanctified. This may seem like a minor point, but it is not, as we shall see.

The sacred here refers to the sacramental, i.e., having to do with the twin covenantal signs of ecclesiastical subordination: in the Mosaic Covenant, circumcision and Passover; in the New Covenant, baptism and the Lord's Supper. The word *sacrament* comes from the Latin word *sacramentum*, a military oath of enlistment.[7]

Anything that violates a holy thing of the Lord becomes profane. In contrast, anything that violates a non-holy thing does not become profane. Such a violation is illegal, but it is not profane. This is the heart of my thesis in this chapter: the association of the biblical concept of *profane* with *unique acts of violation*, namely, violations of a boundary surrounding a judicially holy place or holy object. Profanity in the broadest sense is a breach of a judicial wall of separation between the holy and the common.

Leviticus 5:14–19 offers evidence of a judicial distinction between the sacred and the common, but this difference is minimal in the case of unintentional transgressions: a 20% penalty for violating either a sacred object or sacred space (vv. 15–16). What kind of boundary had been transgressed? Was it geographical? This seems unlikely. The common Israelite was not permitted to enter the inner core of the temple, on threat of death (Ex. 28:43). He would never have been in a position to commit a tabernacle or temple trespass in ignorance. Furthermore, no common priest in his right mind would have tried to enter the holy of holies. He could not have committed such a transgression ignorantly. So, the element of the sacred here must refer to something broader in scope than the performance of temple rituals.

James Jordan wrote that the trespass offering "desanctified Israelites who contacted a holy thing and thereby came under the specially strict laws of the priesthood—a dangerous position to be in unless you had been consecrated as a priest. Since its purpose was to remove this 'priestly' danger, it was always a male sheep (ram)."[8] Judicially, this was Eve's problem. Adam was the priest, yet she approached the tree and ate first, whether or not he was present, whether or not

7. "Sacrament," in *Cyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*, eds. John M'Clintock and James Strong, 12 vols. (New York: Harper & Bros., 1894), IX, p. 212.

8. James Jordan, "The Whole Burnt Sacrifice: Its Liturgy and Meaning," *Biblical Horizons Occasional Paper*, No. 11, p. 2.

he was an accomplice (as Jordan believes he was). When a *judicially non-sanctified agent* comes into contact with something explicitly set apart by God, he has committed a trespass. For this trespass, a special offering is required by God. Under the Mosaic law, this was a ram.

If we are properly to understand the nature of each type of transgression in Leviticus 5:14–19—each type of boundary violation—we must first understand what the idea of the sacred meant under the Old Covenant. Then, and only then, can we begin to understand the meaning of the Bible's concept of the profane.

D. Profane Violations of the Sacred

What "the sacred" refers to is something pertaining to *the ecclesiastical activity of the priesthood in its broadest sense*. Something that belongs to God must not be misused or appropriated unlawfully. Something delegated for exclusive use by God's priesthood must not be used by an unauthorized agent, or used in an unauthorized way by an authorized agent.

1. False Interpretations

To understand what this improper (profane) usage might have been, we need first to consider what it could not have been. To do this, we must consider false interpretations—some ancient, some modern—of the biblical distinction between sacred and common. But before we consider these false interpretations, it is imperative that we recognize that in the Bible, the contrast between sacred and profane is never a contrast between a sacred object or place and a geographically separate object or place. The biblical contrast between sacred vs. profane is between a sacramental object or place and something common, i.e., something non-sacramental, that is *unlawfully inside* a sacred boundary.

Both realms on each side of the boundary are judicially legitimate: the sacred realm and the common realm. The contrast in Leviticus 5:14–16 is not between the sacred and the common; it is the contrast between sacred and profane. Christians can better understand the biblical distinctions between "sacred vs. common" and "sacred vs. profane" by considering the difference between a communion meal held during a worship service in church and a family meal eaten at home by a Christian family. Both meals are equally religious. Both meals are legitimately introduced by prayer. But only one meal is sacramental: the church's communion meal. What must be understood

from the beginning of our discussion is this: *the family meal is not profane. It is common, but it is not profane.* Also, it is religious despite its legal status as common.

Gordon Wenham offered this useful pair of contrasts: common vs. holy (adjectives); profane vs. sanctify (verbs). "'Common' (*hol*) is likewise the reverse of 'holy' (*qadosh*), just as to 'profane' (*hillel*) is the converse of to 'sanctify' (*qiddesh*)."[9] *To* profane and *to* sanctify: these are acts. This accurate pair of contrasts must itself be contrasted with a common error. The sacred is generally understood as a special thing or place (correct), while the profane is also said to be a thing or place (only partially correct and too often misleading).

Why is a thing or place identified as either sacred or profane? For example, a Mosaic priest could *become* profane by marrying a prostitute or a divorced woman (Lev. 21:7, 14). This was because he was judicially sanctified (set apart) by ordination. A prohibited marriage violated a sacred boundary: his office as a priest. Yet even skilled translators have been confused about the biblical meaning of *profane*. This grammatical confusion is a product of theological confusion: a failure to recognize "the profane" as a *violated boundary* of "the sacred," not a common place or thing.

It is incorrect to contrast an inherently sacred place with an inherently profane place. A sacred place has been made sacred by the *judicial declaration* of God or by a priest acting in God's name. It has been sanctified: *set apart judicially*. It is neither naturally nor metaphysically sacred. Similarly, there can be no naturally or metaphysically profane place in the way that there can be a naturally common place. A *profane place* is a *violated sacred place*. It has been the victim of an illegal trespass. The Hebrew word translated most frequently as "profane" (*khaw-lawl*) is usually translated as "slain."[10] It is sometimes translated as "wounded" (I Sam. 17:52). This Hebrew word means *pierced*. It conveys the sense of someone's having violated a boundary. The word is not used in the sense of a common place that just sits there being common. A common place cannot become profane, for it possesses no sacred boundary to trespass; only a sacred place can become profane.

There is considerable confusion over the proper English translation of a Hebrew word related to *khaw-lawl*: *khole*. This word is defined

9. Gordon J. Wenham, *The Book of Leviticus* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1979), p. 19.

10. Num. 19:16; 19:18; 23:24; and dozens of other verses.

by Strong as "common, profane (place), unholy." It does not appear frequently in Scripture, unlike *khaw-lawl*. It was translated by the King James translators as "unholy" (Lev. 10:10),[11] "common" (I Sam. 21:4–5),[12] and "profane" (Ezek. 22:26[13] 42:20,[14] 44:23;[15] 48:15[16]). Modern translators translate *khole* almost randomly as "common," "ordinary," "profane," and "unholy." There seems to be no clear pattern of Hebrew usage in the texts. Ezekiel 42:20 and 48:15 are the only Old Testament passages in which *khole* is used with respect to space. The word should not be translated in these verses as "profane," but rather as "unholy" or "common." The biblical usage of "profane" points to a boundary violation. This usage does not apply in the two Ezekiel passages.

2. The Sacramental

What is "the sacred," biblically speaking? It is not merely the religious sensibility in man, a need analogous to the need for food or sex, as modern academic usage would have it.[17] Rather, it has to do

11. The King James reads: "And that ye may put difference between holy and **unholy**, and between unclean and clean" (Lev. 10:10). The Revised Standard Version agrees. The New American Standard translates it as "profane."

12. The King James reads: "And the priest answered David, and said, There is no **common** bread under mine hand, but there is hallowed bread; if the young men have kept themselves at least from women. And David answered the priest, and said unto him, Of a truth women have been kept from us about these three days, since I came out, and the vessels of the young men are holy [*kodesh*], and the bread is in a manner **common**, yea, though it were sanctified [*kodesh*] this day in the vessel" (I Sam. 21:4–5). The Revised Standard Version agrees. The New American Standard translates *khole* in verse 4 as "consecrated"; in verse 5 as "ordinary." The historical context was the shewbread.

13. The King James reads: "Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned mine holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and *profane*, neither have they shewed difference between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my sabbaths, and I am profaned among them" (Ezek. 22:26). The Revised Standard Version translates it as "common"; the New American Standard Version as "profane."

14. The King James reads: "He measured it by the four sides: it had a wall round about, five hundred reeds long, and five hundred broad, to make a separation between the sanctuary and the **profane** place" (Ezek. 42:20). The Revised Standard Version translates it as "common"; the New American Standard Version as "profane."

15. The King James reads: "And they shall teach my people the difference between the holy and **profane**, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean" (Ezek. 44:23). The Revised Standard Version translates it as "common." The New American Standard Version translates it as "profane."

16. The King James reads: "And the five thousand, that are left in the breadth over against the five and twenty thousand, shall be a **profane** place for the city, for dwelling, and for suburbs: and the city shall be in the midst thereof" (Ezek. 48:15). The Revised Standard Version translates it as "ordinary." The New American Standard Version translates it as "common."

17. Philosopher Allan Bloom argued that modern American thought, under the

with the church's sacraments. In its narrowest sense, the sacred refers to *formal ecclesiastical acts of covenantal subordination*: applying the covenant mark (circumcision, baptism) and partaking of the covenant meal (Passover, Lord's Supper). That which pertains to the sacred is formally under the authority of an ordained church officer. This officer's task is to restrict certain people's access beyond certain specified judicial boundaries. These boundaries are always legal and are sometimes spatial.

There is a biblical distinction between the sacred and the profane, yet they are always linked. A sacred act involves the lawful crossing of a sacred boundary, meaning *a boundary guarded by ordained priests*. A profane act is the unlawful crossing of a priestly boundary, meaning a *judicially segregated* area of atonement. The transgressor has either invaded sacred space or has misused a sacred object that has been set aside by God for a particular use. The essence of the distinction between sacred and profane, biblically speaking, is judicial rather than metaphysical. The profane act is *ritually unauthorized*, either because of the legal status of the transgressor (a non-priest) or because of restrictions placed by God against specific acts by even a priest. It is *the crossing of the boundary* that constitutes the profane act.

The key theological questions regarding the Old Covenant's liturgically sacred spaces or objects are these: Was the specified ritual a means of (1) imparting *independent metaphysical power* to the participants; or (2) *symbolically identifying* members of an ecclesiastically separate community; or (3) publicly identifying the *legal status* of those who were covenantally bound together? Put another way, was "the sacred" metaphysical, symbolic, or covenantal? We can ask the same question about New Covenant rituals, too.

There are three (and only three) internally consistent answers. A

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influence of German sociology, has replaced the ideas of God and religion with the all-embracing idea of "the sacred." Wrote Bloom: "This entire language, as I have tried to show, implies that the religious is the source of everything political, social and personal; and it still conveys something like that. But it has done nothing to reestablish religion—which puts us in a pretty pickle. . . . As the religious essence has gradually become a thin, putrid gas spread out through our whole atmosphere, it has gradually become respectable to speak of it under the marvelously portentous name *the sacred*." Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1987), pp. 214–15. He was on target: "These sociologists who talk so facilely about the sacred are like a man who keeps a toothless old circus lion around the house in order to experience the thrills of the jungle." *Ibid.*, p. 216; cf. 230. The popularity of this theme, according to Mircea Eliade, began with the publication in 1917 of Rudolph Otto's *Das Heilage* (*The Sacred*): Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*, trans. Willard Trask (New York: Harper Torchbooks, [1957] 1961), p. 8.

person's answer, if followed consistently, will strongly influence his social theory.[18] First, the sacred ritual act or the sacred space is autonomously, metaphysically powerful; to violate it unleashes cosmic or supernatural forces (*realism*).[19] Second, the sacred ritual act or sacred space is merely symbolic: it serves only to manifest the ethical condition of the participants (*nominalism*).[20] Third, the sacred ritual act or sacred space is judicially protected by God: a boundary that invokes (calls forth) God's sanctions, both historical and eternal, in terms of biblical law (*covenantalism*).[21]

E. Adam's Transgression

The best way biblically to answer this debate over the nature of the sacred is to consider Adam's transgression. When God announced a judicial boundary around the forbidden tree, did He invest the tree and its fruit with special properties that would automatically produce certain results if touched or eaten? Or was the tree merely symbolic, having no express judicial relationship with God, but only giving Adam an opportunity to prove himself faithful or not? Or was the tree set apart as a unique place of communion, a place declared by God as off-limits to Adam? We need to consider the three views of the sacred and their respective analyses. The first two answers conform to the philosophical categories of realism and nominalism. Both are incorrect. The third position conforms to the biblical category, covenantalism.

18. Gary North, *Millennialism and Social Theory* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1990), pp. 34–39. I want to write a book called *Sanctions and Social Theory*, which will consider in detail these three perspectives. I probably won't.

19. Realism asserts that there is a fundamental unity of being throughout the universe. Everything is inherently connected. In other words, "as above, so below": the reigning view of all magical systems. Plato was the great philosopher of realism, as were the neoplatonists after him.

20. Nominalism asserts that everything is inherently unconnected in the universe. The connections that appear to exist are merely conventional, i.e., thinking makes them so. David Hume was the great modern philosopher of nominalism, and before him, William of Occam.

21. Covenantalism asserts a fundamental distinction between the being of God and the being of creation: the Creator-creature distinction. God literally spoke creation into existence: a fiat act (Gen. 1). He holds creation together by a continuing act of will. All of the connections within the creation are based ultimately on the judicial decrees of God. Because these connections are ultimately judicial, all of nature was cursed when Adam rebelled (Gen. 3:17), and looks forward to redemption (Rom. 8:22). John Calvin was the great theologian of covenantalism; Cornelius Van Til was his most philosophically consistent heir. Johannus Althusius (c. 1600) was the only major—in my opinion, the only—modern political philosopher of covenantalism until Rushdoony appeared.

1. Metaphysical Boundary

We know that their eyes were immediately opened after they ate. They recognized their own nakedness and guilt. Was the fruit itself the source of their discontinuous change of perception? Was the tree a gateway to cosmic forces of illumination, a "cosmic tree," to use the language of pagan mythology?[22] Did it mark "the center of the world," the supreme sacred space?[23] Could Adam and Eve somehow manipulate these cosmic forces to gain further knowledge or power? Was the forbidden tree a microcosm that offered man power over the macrocosm, analogous to the voodoo doll's supposed power to produce analogous effects in the thing represented by the doll? Could Adam and Eve achieve "unity of being" with the universe through subsequent forbidden feasts? Could they achieve self-transcendence? In short, could they become mini-gods, as Satan had promised Eve (Gen. 3:5)?

The Genesis account of their transgression informs us that immediately after their eyes were opened, the forbidden tree was no longer the focus of their interest. They did not seek additional fruit. They did not invoke cosmic forces to protect them or do their bidding. They paid no further attention to the tree. They did not act as though they believed the tree possessed any special properties other than its fruit, which was admittedly good to view and good to eat. Even the serpent said nothing further to them. There was no need for him to say anything. His words and work were over. Adam and Eve had performed the profane act. It was an act of judicial transgression: a trespass.

It is clear that their new-found self-awareness was the product of *self-judgment*: they had evaluated their act of rebellion in the light of their new interpretation of God's word.[24] They did not rush to dis-

22. The cosmic tree was related to the idea of the cosmic mountain: the *axis mundi* or axis of the world—the line drawn through the earth which points to the pole star. It was the link between heaven and earth. See Mircea Eliade, *Patterns in Comparative Religion* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1958), p. 111; cf. 266–67, 271, 273–74. On the *axis mundi*, see the extraordinary, complex, and cryptic book on ancient mathematics, myth, and cosmology, *Hamlet's Mill: An essay on myth and the frame of time*, by Giorgio de Santillana and Hertha von Dechend (Boston: Gambit, 1969). It should be obvious what the source of these cosmic tree and cosmic mountain myths was: the garden of Eden, itself located on a mountain or raised area, for the river flowing through it became four rivers (Gen. 2:10).

23. Eliade wrote: "The tree came to express the cosmos fully in itself, by embodying, in apparently static form, its 'force', its life and its quality of periodic regeneration." *Patterns*, p. 271.

24. That it was a new interpretation is seen in their response: sewing fig leaf aprons rather than confessing their sin in prayer and seeking God's forgiveness.

cover a chemical formula for an antidote to poison fruit. They also did not rush to discover a magical formula to protect themselves from the cosmic forces that the fruit had unleashed. They correctly understood that the fruit was not their problem; God's promised judgment was. The tree had meaning to them only in terms of God's legal boundary around it, which they had transgressed. The fruit was of no further interest or use to them. They referred to it again only under God's subsequent cross-examination. Any assessment of the fruit as a metaphysical object is erroneous. This brings us to the next possibility: the fruit as a symbolic boundary between God and man.

2. Symbolic Boundary

What about the tree's unique symbolic status? Was the response of Adam and Eve merely the product of an increase in their self-awareness, a perception induced solely by their act of transgression? In other words, was the tree merely a symbolic agency in the transformation of their own self-awareness, something like an ethical mirror? Was the *transformational power* of the tree merely psychological? In short, had the transformational power of the tree merely been *imputed* to it by Adam and Eve?

If the tree served solely as a symbol of man's ethical condition, then on what basis did the radical and discontinuous increase of their mutual self-awareness take place? What was it about eating forbidden fruit that produced their perception of nakedness? Their immediate concern was not that they feared that God would bring judgment against them sometime in the future; it was that they were immediately discomforted by their own nakedness. It was not that the now-partially denuded tree pointed symbolically to their completely denuded judicial condition in the eyes of God; it was that they experienced shame in their own eyes as judges. God had assigned a necessarily judicial task to them when He told Adam to guard the garden.[25] Adam's task was to announce preliminary judgment against Satan, for Satan had testified falsely regarding the character of God. "Hath God said?" the serpent had asked. But Adam and Eve had served instead as false judges, rendering judgment implicitly against God and explicitly against God's word.[26] Immediately, they recognized that

25. "And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep [*shaw-mar*: guard] it" (Gen. 2:15).

26. Gary North, *Sovereignty and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Genesis* (Dallas, Georgia: [1987] 2012), Appendix E.

they were wearing no "robes"—the mark of lawful judicial authority. They were *judicially uncovered* before each other. Their perceived dilemma had nothing further to do with the tree. Now the primary symbol of their spiritual condition was their own naked flesh. They sought to cover this revelation with fig leaves.

God was not physically present in the garden immediately after their sin. He did not shout out a warning to them: "I said not to touch that!" He gave them time to respond, either as covenant-breakers or covenant-keepers. They responded as covenant-breakers. They knew that His negative sanctions were coming, but their immediate concern was not their nakedness in His eyes; it was nakedness in their own eyes. Later, they hid themselves from God when they heard Him coming; in the meantime, they felt a compulsive need to hide their flesh from each other.

They reacted as though the psychological effects of eating from a merely symbolic tree—their sense of shame regarding their own personal nakedness—could be successfully covered by the leaves of another fruit-bearing tree. A representative of the plant kingdom had been a crucial aspect of this crisis of perception, so they covered themselves with leaves. They did not slay the serpent or some other animal in their quest for a covering. *They dealt with their sin symbolically*: the tree had become to them a symbol of their transgression, and so their required coverings should be of a similar kind. They were wrong. *Their problem was judicial, not symbolic*. They had not transgressed a symbol; they had transgressed the boundary surrounding God's only restricted property. They had been involved in a *boundary violation*. It is not that some sacred object serves as man's ethical mirror; it is instead God's law that serves as the mirror.[27]

3. Judicial Boundary

"And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked" (Gen. 3:7a). The use of the passive voice here is significant. *By whom* were their eyes opened? Either by God directly or by their own consciences as God's image-bearers. We are not told. What we are told is that prior to their act of transgression, their eyes were not open; afterwards, they were. This must mean that "open eyes" in

27. "For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass [mirror]: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed" (James 1:23–25).

this sense was *judicial*. They *saw* what they had done. They *evaluated* their new condition in the light of God's warning. They *understood* at least some of the consequences. But, being in sin, they misjudged what would be required to cover the effects of their sin. They twisted their own self-judgment. They made it seem less important than it was, as if it were a sin suitable for self-atonement.

The tree served as a symbol only to the degree that it was *set apart* (sanctified) by God as His exclusive property. The tree did not reflect man or man's psyche; it represented God as sovereign owner of the cosmos. Its status as a visible symbol (i.e., *judicial evidence*) of man's covenant status was relevant only in terms of its own designated status as a sanctified object. It had been judicially and verbally set apart by God. The tree was therefore *sacred*. It was not to be touched or eaten by man until God removed the restriction. To violate this sacred object was to *profane it*. To eat from it meant death, not in the sense of a poison apple, nor in the sense of a prohibited metaphysical doorway to overwhelming cosmic forces, nor in the sense of a means of man's self-realization of his own inherent evil, but in the sense of inevitable historical and eternal sanctions imposed by an absolute personal God. Eating from the tree changed man's judicial status. This was a profane act. Adam became profane: entering the judicial status of God's declaration, "Guilty as charged." He became *sacrilegious*.[28]

F. Sacred Objects, Sacred Space

Sacred objects and sacred space are familiar themes in the Old Testament. The Ark of the Covenant is an example of a sacred object: it was not to be touched. It had rings on its sides through which poles were to be inserted, so that no one would need touch it when moving it (Ex. 25:14). Furthermore, only the Levites were permitted to carry it (Deut. 10:8). When one man dared to reach out to steady it as it was being moved, God struck him dead (I Chron. 13:9–10). When the Philistines brought the Ark into their territory, God struck down the image of their god, Dagon, and struck them with boils (I Sam. 5). They sent the Ark back to Israel on a cart pulled by oxen. They also placed gold objects into the cart as a trespass offering (I Sam. 6:8).[29]

28. Appendix A.

29. That the profanation of the Ark of the Covenant was unintentional on their part is proven by the fact that they called their priests and divines to explain the cause of the visible judgments (I Sam. 6:3). They also placed the Ark on a cart drawn by oxen; the animals' selection of the path would tell them whether the Ark belonged back in Israel. By the terms of their test, if the oxen did not return to Israel, the Philistines

God dealt even more harshly with the Israelites at Beth-Shemesh, who dared to look into it. For this act of sacrilege, God struck over 50,000 of them (I Sam 6:19).[30]

The interior of the Ark itself was sacred space. No one was allowed to look inside it. It was housed in the holy of holies, a sacred room inside the tabernacle and temple. Only the high priest was allowed to enter this space, and only once each year (Lev. 16:2). He had to sprinkle the interior with blood as a ransom payment for himself and the people (Lev. 16:14–15). In short, this most sacred of objects was surrounded by sacred space—in fact, layers of sacred space, beginning at the national borders of Israel.

What is easily misunderstood is *the judicial character of these sacred objects and spaces*. It is easy to misinterpret sacred objects and sacred spaces as metaphysical-magical, i.e., power-bearing and power-granting. This was the theme of the enormously popular movie, *Raiders of the Lost Ark* and its second sequel, *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*, which was another in a long Western heritage of fantasies regarding the holy grail.[31] Through techniques of ritual manipulation—a variant of environmental determinism—the bearer of such objects supposedly achieves not only supernatural power but also self-transcendence. At the very least, he achieves mystical illumination.[32] Crossing the bridge or gateway between heaven and earth is supposedly achieved through possession of such objects and the ritually precise manipulation of them. The hypothetical chain of being between man and God is manifested through the possession of sacred objects or entry into sacred space. The primary concern of the manipulator is with precise ritual rather than ethics. His thinking is governed by the magical formula, "As above, so below." E. M. Butler described the goal of magic; it is also the goal of modern social engineering: "The fundamental aim of all magic is to impose the human will on nature, on man or on the supersensual world in order to master them."[33]

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could safely conclude that the simultaneous presence of the Ark and their boils was a coincidence (I Sam. 6:9).

30. It is not clear that He killed them.

31. The holy grail is popularly imagined as the chalice from which Christ and the disciples drank at the Last Supper. Occultists view it as the equivalent of the philosopher's stone: a means of self-transcendence, the escape from creaturehood. See, for example, Trevor Ravenscroft, *The Spear of Destiny* (New York: Bantam, [1973] 1974), p. 49.

32. The word used by Indiana Jones' archeologist father in *The Last Crusade* describing his experience with the grail was "illuminating."

33. E. M. Butler, *Ritual Magic* (San Bernardino, California: Borgo Press, [1949] 1980), p. 1.

This metaphysical interpretation of the sacred misses the point. The identifying feature of any sacred object is its unique judicial character. The sacred object brings man into the judicial presence of the covenant God who judges in time and eternity.

Inside the Ark of the Covenant were the two tablets of the law (Deut. 31:26). The Ark served as the earthly throne of God, the place where the high priest annually placated His wrath. This is why the holy of holies in which the Ark was housed was so holy. The biblical formula from which the magical formula is derived is overwhelmingly ethical and judicial: "On earth, as it is in heaven." This phrase appears in the Lord's Prayer as part of the identification of *God's name as holy*—hallowed—and a call for *kingdom justice in history*: "After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6:9–10).[34]

Sacred space is not magical space; it is *judicially sanctified space*. It has been hallowed—made holy, meaning set apart—by God. When a man enters it, he draws close to God judicially. God's place of residence is His place of judgment. He sits on a throne of judgment. Sacred space is *holy* space: space which is *legally marked off* by God as the place of required covenantal ritual, where man meets God judicially on a regular basis. Without such lawful access, sacred space becomes a threat to man.[35] It is a place of *judgment*. Entering sacred space requires special acts of judicial separation by man. We read in Exodus: "And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I. And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes

34. It is significant that the call for the coming of the kingdom appears early in the Lord's Prayer, prior to "give us this day our daily bread." What we need to recognize is that this prayer is a covenant document structured in terms of the familiar five points: (1) transcendence (Father who is in heaven, holy name); (2) hierarchy (kingdom come: king rules); (3) law/dominion (God's will—law—be done on earth as it is in heaven); (4) sanctions (daily bread, forgiveness of sins); (5) continuity/eschatology (deliverance from evil; hence, kingdom, power, and glory forever). Notice that the call for the kingdom to come on earth (#2), manifested by obedience to His law (#3), precedes the request for daily bread (#4). God's kingdom on earth is therefore not to be regarded as exclusively eschatological; it is identified as historical and progressive, just as God's provision of our daily bread is.

35. The garden of Eden was such a sacred space. Because the tree of life was within its boundaries, God sealed off its boundaries with a flaming sword and angels. This meant that man was not permitted to come into God's presence there, for it was a place of absolute judgment. To eat sacramentally of the tree of life in an unlawful manner would have meant the attainment of perpetual temporal existence apart from covenantal obedience, i.e., hell.

from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground" (Ex. 3:4–5). The soil within the boundary lines of God's place of residence was not ritually polluted for Old Covenant man; hence, wearing shoes was not ritually (judicially) appropriate. You removed them as your public acknowledgment that you were entering God's place of special judicial presence.[36] You had crossed a judicial boundary, so your normal behavior had to change.

If God moves His place of earthly residence—the place of *legal communion* with man—sacred space necessarily moves with Him. Sacred space can move from place to place, just as the tabernacle was moved by the priests in response to God's glory cloud.[37] Sacred space may also be a fixed geographical area, as the temple was in ancient Israel. In the New Covenant order, sacred space moves with the sacraments; the place where the sacraments are lawfully offered is sacred space. Judicially to transgress this space or misuse the objects of the sacramental meal is to commit sacrilege. The threat of profanity was always judicial. Under the Mosaic covenant, this judicial threat was primarily manifested geographically, i.e., an invasion of judicially protected space. The judicial aspect of sacred space was understood far less clearly during the Old Covenant era.

G. Sacred Space in the New Covenant Era

The primary boundaries of life are legal-covenantal. This is more evident today. The New Covenant has drastically reduced the element of the sacred in geographical boundaries, except insofar as there is legal ownership of property by a church. *Sacrilege* today does not mean the physical invasion of sacred space; it means the transgression of the church's rights of ownership, i.e., the *legal immunities* associated with ownership, most importantly, *the church's legal right to exclude*.

36. This is still required in Islamic mosques.

37. Meredith G. Kline wrote: "God's theophanic glory is the glory of royal majesty. At the center of the heavens within the veil of the Glory-cloud is found a throne; the Glory is preeminently the place of God's enthronement. It is, therefore, a royal palace, site of the divine council and court of judgment. As royal house of a divine King, the dwelling of deity, it is a holy house, a temple. Yet the Glory is a not static structure, but mobile, for the throne is a chariot-throne, Spirit directed and propelled through the winged beings, a vehicle of divine judgment, moving with the swiftness of light to execute the sentence of the King." Kline, *Images of the Spirit* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker, 1980), pp. 17–18. Kline's concept of God's judgments in New Covenant history abandons all traces of the chariot-throne imagery and power. See Kline, "Comments on an Old-New Error," *Westminster Theological Journal*, XLI (Fall 1978). For my response, see North, *Millennialism and Social Theory*, ch. 7.

This may include the right to exclude certain people from a church building under certain conditions,[38] but it means primarily the rights associated with the exclusion of people from the sacraments. For example, any attempt by the state to infringe on the right of a Trinitarian church to declare someone excommunicate is an act of sacrilege: a challenge to the lawful authority of the church. It is a profane act: a boundary violation.

A profound change came to the gentile world through the New Covenant. The covenantally unique judicial-geographical boundary system of ancient Israel's theocratic kingdom was extended to embrace all the nations through the church. "Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof" (Matt. 21:43). Other nations—judicial collectives—are now told to establish a formal covenant with God. Jesus' Great Commission says: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Matt. 28:19–20). This is a comprehensive, world-transforming commission.[39] The invocation of these national covenants involve boundaries (nations), a covenant sign (baptism), covenant law ("observe all things"), a covenant promise (God's judicial presence), and a time frame (to the end of the world).

1. Removing Boundaries

Other changes have taken place. In the New Covenant era, the ground is no longer cursed. The whole earth has been definitively cleansed by the historical death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ. Today we wear shoes in order to protect our feet, not because the ground is ritually cursed and therefore a threat to judicially holy people, as was the case in the Old Covenant. Unlike Muslims in mosques and worshippers in pagan temples, we do not take off our shoes when we come into the presence of God at church. During the Old Covenant era, from at least Abraham's time (Gen. 18:4), dirty feet meant defilement (Song of Solomon 5:3). Before entering the tabernacle, every person had to wash his feet (Ex. 30:20–21). Jesus

38. An example would be the invasion of the Faith Baptist Church of Lewisville, Nebraska, by the local sheriff and his men in 1982. See H. Edward Rowe, *The Day They Padlocked the Church* (Shreveport, Louisiana: Huntington House, 1983).

39. Kenneth L. Gentry, Jr., *The Greatness of the Great Commission: The Christian Enterprise in a Fallen World* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1990).

told the apostles at the Last Supper that because He had washed their feet, they should wash each other's feet (John 13:14). Yet very few churches continue to practice the foot-washing ceremony of Christ's day, and none has substituted a shoe-shining ceremony. Why not? Because the ground is no longer cursed. Shaking the dust off one's feet is no longer a symbol of God's wrath, as it was in Jesus' day. There is no special dwelling place of God outside of the place of His special *judicial presence* during formal church worship: ceremonies bounded by time, space, and law, but not bounded by ritual standards of clean and unclean objects or clean and unclean people.

In the Mosaic Covenant, pork was prohibited. So were other kinds of flesh. (There were never any "clean-unclean" distinctions within the vegetable realm.) The Israelites were required to eat lamb at the Passover. Blood had to be shed, but not the blood of unclean animals. In the New Covenant, no meat is eaten at the communion meal. Products of the vegetable realm—bread and wine—are required. Why no meat? Because the shedding of judicially atoning blood is behind us. That any Christian could even hint at the possibility of the future re-establishment of the ritual slaying of lambs for a re-enacted Passover meal testifies to the failure of the modern church to preach the progressive conquest of nature by grace in history. The church is failing to preach the progressive restoration of all things through the judicial power delivered to Christians by means of Christ's ascension and the coming of the Holy Spirit.[40] Judicial peace between God and grace-redeemed man has definitively come, though not finally. We still await the day when lambs will sit down with lions (Isa. 65:25a); we do not await the restoration of temple sacrifices.

2. Nature and Grace

The removal of sacred boundaries in the New Covenant does not imply that nature (the common) is somehow swallowing up grace (the sacred). It is not that nature is pushing grace into ever-smaller corners of man's existence. The Bible teaches that all of nature is sustained by God's grace, i.e., *God's unearned gifts* to men, beasts, and even demons. He gives us life, time, knowledge, and power, none of which is in any way autonomously deserved by the recipients. Ours is a providentially sustained world. In the New Covenant, as in the Old, nature does not swallow up grace. *Both the sacred and the common are under grace.*

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40. Gary North, *Is the World Running Down? Crisis in the Christian Worldview* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1988).

God's special grace to His people—and only to His people—is the foundation, judicially (justification) and ethically (sanctification), of comprehensive transformation, both personal and cultural. Special grace is *marked publicly* by the presence of church sacraments. After baptism, grace is *empowered spiritually* by the Lord's Supper, but it is not restricted to (bounded by) the Lord's Supper. Special grace also operates in the realm outside the institutional church: in family and state covenants, and in all the other social institutions that are under the lawful jurisdictions (plural) of family and state.

Not only does nature not swallow up grace in history, the realm of common grace is steadily transformed by special grace, either through widespread conversions or by example and imitation by the unconverted for the sake of the external positive sanctions associated with external covenant-keeping.[41] To deny that common grace is affected by what takes place in the realm of special grace is necessarily to deny the covenantal basis of New Covenant history: progress or decline in terms of covenant-keeping. The directionality of history then loses its character as biblically progressive; its events becomes random, covenantally speaking. *History is then seen as linear but not progressive*.[42] This is the theological error of amillennialism. It is seen in its most consistent form in the theology of the small Protestant Reformed Church, a Dutch-American denomination, which denies the existence of common grace and aggressively rejects postmillennialism.[43] It also remains silent on biblical law and its sanctions.

H. Profanity, Priesthoods, and Pagans

I have argued that the fundamental distinction between sacred and common has to do with the *judicial status* of the object or space in question. The distinction between sacred and common is not "magic vs. convention" or "religious vs. secular." It is rather the distinction between sacramental and non-sacramental. The separation between sacred and profane is a very different kind of distinction from the distinction between sacred and common. The distinction between sacred and profane is the distinction between that which is *authorized sacramentally* and that which is *unauthorized sacramentally*. Adam be-

41. Gary North, *Dominion and Common Grace: The Biblical Basis of Progress* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1987).

42. This is Meredith G. Kline's view of New Covenant history: "Comments on an Old-New Error," *op. cit.*

43. David J. Engelsma, *Christ's Spiritual Kingdom: A Defense of Reformed Amillennialism* (Redlands, California: Reformed Witness, 2001).

came profane in his act of rebellion. He violated a sacred boundary.

Because we enter into *the judgmental presence of God* during the worship service, Christians do enter sacred space. But this space is sacred because of the judicial presence of God, not because any special attribute attaches to a geographical area. *Sacred space and sacred time lose their sacred character when formal corporate worship ends*. These acts of worship are sacred only because they are performed in the judicial presence of the ultimate sacred space, the throne of God. The discontinuity—the *boundary*—between sacred and common is *judicial*. This discontinuity is radical. This is why Paul warned potential participants in the Lord's Supper to judge themselves before partaking. "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep" (I Cor. 11:28–30). No other meal kills people judicially.

This emphasis on the radical discontinuity between sacred and common raises an important question: Why was there only a 20% additional penalty for unpremeditated profane transgressions of the sacred in Leviticus 5:16? This relatively minimal penalty does not seem to reflect the magnitude of the judicial distinction between sacred and common. On the other hand, if the 20% penalty is the judicial standard of this differentiation, is there a more fundamental distinction than "sacred vs. common"? To answer these questions, we need to understand the biblical meaning of profanity.

1. Profanity

The use of "profane" in the Bible occurs most frequently with respect to *the misuse of God's name*. Verbal profanity, as distinguished from verbal obscenity, is sometimes an unauthorized invocation of a judicial oath: the curse of God. Ultimately, it is a *self-maledictory oath*: "May God destroy me if I do not fulfill the terms of His covenant." This is the verbal transgression of a judicial boundary: he who is common is using a sacred means of bringing sanctions—a verbal act that is judicially sanctioned by God only for the ordained holder of a covenantal office. Profanity involves either the misuse of God's name for one's own purposes or the performance of ritual acts that misrepresent God. It always involves a boundary violation. This is why the third commandment—"Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his

name in vain" (Ex. 20:7)—is third: it prohibits the transgression of a boundary (point three of the biblical covenant). Transgressing a covenantal boundary produces a new judicial status in the transgressor: guilty.

What kind of boundary is this? It is a verbal or ritual boundary that publicly manifests the covenant. This is an act of *formal* covenant- breaking—not just the transgression of one of the stipulations of the covenant, but the covenant itself.

> And thou shalt not let any of thy seed pass through the fire to Molech, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I am the LORD (Lev. 18:21).

> And ye shall not swear by my name falsely, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I am the LORD (Lev. 19:12).

> And I will set my face against that man, and will cut him off from among his people; because he hath given of his seed unto Molech, to defile my sanctuary, and to profane my holy name (Lev. 20:3).

> They shall be holy unto their God, and not profane the name of their God: for the offerings of the LORD made by fire, and the bread of their God, they do offer: therefore they shall be holy (Lev. 21:6).

> Speak unto Aaron and to his sons, that they separate themselves from the holy things of the children of Israel, and that they profane not my holy name in those things which they hallow unto me: I am the LORD (Lev. 22:2).

Something has been *set apart* by God for His own use. It is therefore *holy*. It is *sanctified* or *hallowed*. God places special boundaries around these objects, and these boundaries can lawfully be penetrated only on God's publicly specified terms. The name of God is one of these holy objects. Since only the priest—a man who has been set apart judicially by God so that he can draw close to God's place of judgment—is authorized to pass through these boundaries, any violation of these boundaries is inherently a priestly act. Violators become profane.

2. Priesthoods

Profanity in the Old Covenant era, and also in the New Covenant era, was primarily a *priestly misrepresentation of God*, either in sacramental word or sacramental deed, such as offering one's child to another god in an act of formal covenant-breaking with Israel's God. In short, *profanity is a covenant-breaking or covenant-denying priestly act*.

Profanity is distinguished judicially from non-sacramental violations of God's moral law. It is a violation of God's priestly law.

Those under the jurisdiction of God's ecclesiastical covenant—i.e., under His *spoken legal word*—are uniquely authorized by God to speak and act in particular ways. This means that they are bound—i.e., under *judicial boundaries*—to speak and act in these specified ways. They have been granted a covenantal monopoly. It is a monopoly—*special legal status*—in both the positive and negative sense: special duties, special penalties. Certain acts must be done in certain ways by certain people. These acts are *representative* acts. They are *hierarchical*, as in priestly (*hierus*).[44] At the same time, being legally representative, only representatives are allowed to perform them. These acts must be done by someone (inclusive), and they must not be done by someone else (exclusive). These acts are therefore *mediatorial*.

As God's designated legal representative on earth and in history, the Mosaic Covenant priest's language and conduct had to represent God faithfully. His special legal status carried greater legal liability. Ignorantly speaking or acting in an illegitimate but non-sacramental fashion necessarily invoked ("called forth") a particular penalty. Ignorantly speaking or acting illegitimately in a sacramental fashion invoked a marginally greater penalty: one-fifth. Why only marginal? *Because the marginal difference between the sanctions that distinguished the sacred from the common pointed judicially to the near-sacred character of everything in Israel.* It testified to the special judicial status of the promised land as a nation of priests (Ex. 19:6). *Legal access to sacred judicial space* is the key to a correct understanding of the sacred-common distinction and the sacred-profane distinction.

(a) Distinctions Within Perfection

Let us return to the archetype example: the heaven-hell distinction. Better yet, consider this: the post-resurrection new heavens, new earth (Rev. 21) vs. the lake of fire (Rev. 20:14–15). Dwelling in the post-resurrection new heavens and new earth, there will be nothing but perfect humans. This includes Jesus Christ. The perfect humanity of Jesus Christ will possess greater holiness than the perfect humanity of everyone else. By the intervention of the Holy Spirit, Jesus was conceived in perfection, unlike all other post-Adamic humans, and then sustained His salvation through His perfect obedience to God's

44. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1965), III, pp. 257–65.

law. Nobody else can do this in history. He now lawfully sits beside God the Father on the throne; no one else does. But the difference in the degree of holiness (set-apartness) between Jesus Christ's perfect humanity—not His divinity—and the resurrected saint's perfect humanity will be of far less magnitude than the disparity between the resurrected covenant-keeper's perfect humanity and the resurrected covenant-breaker's morally perverse humanity. The resurrected saint will have eternal legal access to God's throne of grace; the resurrected covenant-breaker will not.

Similarly, the priest's judicial holiness in ancient Israel was greater than the common Israelite's holiness, but the magnitude of judicial separation between an ordained priest and an Israelite was far less than the difference between an Israelite and an uncircumcised person living outside the land. Priests and Israelites participated in Passover. Uncircumcised men and the women under the authority of uncircumcised men did not.

(b) Degrees of Holiness

Leviticus 5:14–19 deals with transgressions committed in ignorance. Thus, the distinction here between sacred and common was not intended to focus on the radical difference between heaven and hell. It was intended to distinguish *priestly activities* in Israel from *routine activities* in Israel. Because so much of Israel's daily life was judicially closer to God than the same activities performed outside the land, i.e., acts performed by those who were not under the Mosaic covenant, *it was easier to commit a boundary violation inadvertently within Israel*. The Israelites were all far closer to God judicially than were uncircumcised pagans who lived outside the boundaries of the land. The Israelites served as priests to the whole world: representative agents between God and pagan mankind.[45] They were guardians of a boundary. The priests served as God's representative agents mediating between Israel and God. They, too, were guardians of a boundary. The magnitude of the covenantal separation of the second boundary was not nearly so great as the magnitude of the first.

There were degrees of culpability and responsibility under the Mosaic Covenant. This fact was reflected in the *degrees of official holiness*—holiness of office and holiness of behavior—that were required as one approached the holy of holies, the place where God dwelt judicially.

45. This is why they sacrificed 70 bullocks at the feast of trumpets (Num. 29): to offer atonement for the 70 nations (the world).

The high priest could go into the holy of holies to offer sacrifice only once a year. He was under tight restrictions; if he performed his task in an unauthorized fashion, he would be struck dead (Ex. 28:33–35). The closer someone came to God's geographical place of judgment, the more vulnerable to God's sanctions he became (Num. 3).[46] A series of judicial boundaries marked one's movement away from the holy of holies and out of the land.[47] These boundaries marked *a reduction in monopoly legal status* as men moved away from the temple and toward the world of paganism.

3. Pagans

It is common to speak of the religious condition of the pagan as profane. Everything he does supposedly is profane. But this raises a theological problem: How can his legal status be profane if he is so far from God judicially? If it is true that profanity, biblically speaking, is legally a violation of some *priestly aspect* of covenant law, how can the pagan accurately be said to be a profane person? In the Mosaic Covenant era, sacred objects and sacred space were exclusively inside the geographical boundaries of Israel. The pagan could violate no priestly boundaries if he was outside the land of Israel. How could the pagan have committed a profane act? To answer this question, we need to discuss the legal status of the pagan.

The pagan in the Mosaic-era Covenant was an uncircumcised male, or a female not under the lawful jurisdiction of a circumcised male,[48] who lived outside the covenant: no legal access to Passover. Most pagans lived outside the geographical and cultural boundaries that God had drawn around His people as their protected area of dominion. Within these judicial boundaries, a unique system of law prevailed.[49] The question then arises: How unique? This raises the fundamental issue of *theonomy*.

The pagan was under a temporal and eternal obligation to obey all of God's civil laws except those that applied explicitly to the administration of the land of Israel, which means primarily the jubilee land

46. Gary North, *Sanctions and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Numbers*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [1997] 2012), ch. 3.

47. James Jordan, *Through New Eyes: Developing a Biblical View of the World* (Brentwood, Tennessee: Wolgemuth & Hyatt, 1988), ch. 15.

48. An exception was a widow or divorced wife of an Israelite. She had the authority to take a vow without confirmation by husband or father (Num. 30:9).

49. The link between law, boundaries, and dominion is basic to the biblical covenant model: point three.

laws (Lev. 25)[50] and the laws of ritual defilement and cleansing: the laws marking the *holiness*—i.e., *set-apartness*—of the Israelite nation of priests. God did not give to the pagan nations a judicial revelation of His holiness comparable to that which He gave to those inside the land. The Israelites were unique: greater revelation, greater responsibility.

This does not mean that pagan nations of the Mosaic era were legitimately under different moral standards, i.e., not under the moral requirements *and civil sanctions* of the Ten Commandments. Bahnsen's comments are appropriate: "The fact that God was dealing with Israel in a redemptive and covenantal fashion, and not setting His electing love upon any other nation (cf. Amos 3:2),[51] did not introduce a disparity or difference in moral standards between Israel and the nations. All those who wander from God's statutes—indeed, all the wicked of the earth—are condemned by God, according to Psalm 119:118–119."[52] This passage in Psalms reads: "Thou hast trodden down all them that err from thy statutes: for their deceit is falsehood. Thou puttest away all the wicked of the earth like dross: therefore I love thy testimonies."

The Mosaic-era pagan was always under the *non-geographical and un-priestly* stipulations of God's covenant law. This means that he was not under the rules that applied to the ecclesiastical priests of Israel. He did not possess their priestly status. He did not come close to Israel's sacred spaces. Then how could he have been profane? Only as *a son of Adam*. What Adam imparted to his heirs was his judicial status as a covenant-breaker, that is, a *sacred boundary violator*. Adam was a legal representative for all mankind. He was mankind's high priest. He administered lawful access to the two sacred trees. These two trees were the only sacred objects in the garden. They grew in the sacred places where man could eat a sacred meal of communion with his God. Only one tree was prohibited to him: the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Adam violated the boundaries—physical and temporal—of this prohibited tree, i.e., *profaned* it. By eating of it *prematurely* and in direct violation of God's law, Adam ate in communion with his god, Satan. He thereby became a profane man—the most profane man in history.[53]

50. These laws were an aspect of the original conquest of the land, i.e., the military spoils of a one-time event.

51. "You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities."

52. Greg L. Bahnsen, *By This Standard: The Authority of God's Law Today* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1985), pp. 237–38.

53. Some might argue that Judas Iscariot's profanity exceeded Adam's. His act of

Every pagan son of Adam is profane in a general sense: as God's image-bearer who broke the covenant. As a covenant-breaker on his own, he is not testifying accurately in word and deed to the moral character of the Creator. He begins life as a covenant-breaker: an heir of Adam, the high priest who committed sacrilege representatively for all mankind. Because he is born with this judicial status, he does not *become* a profane person by his self-consciously profane acts. He merely *identifies* himself as a judicially profane person in history. He progressively works out in history the legal status he was born with—a kind of perverse form of progressive sanctification. He *sets himself apart* from God both judicially and morally as time goes on: negative progressive sanctification. (Perhaps we should call this process *regressive sanctification*.) Nevertheless, the Old Covenant era pagan was not profane in a Mosaic priestly sense. He was not a designated priest of God.[54] He was outside the formal boundaries of God's covenant with national Israel. So, in a general *Adamic* sense he was a profane person; in a specific *Mosaic* sense, he was not.

I. What Constituted "Ignorant Profanity"?

It has taken me considerable space—none of it sacred—to get to the question of what, exactly, the law of Leviticus 5:14–19 referred to. A profane act under the Old Covenant necessarily involved the church, for it involved some aspect of the sacraments, i.e., the priesthood. To violate the office of priest, either as a priest or as a layman, was considered profane. If done in ignorance, there was an added penalty of one-fifth.

There was an ownership principle involved. God had established legal boundaries around the sacraments: spatial boundaries and liturgical boundaries. These were ultimately *ownership boundaries*, analogous to the boundary He placed around the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. *That which belongs exclusively to God is specially protected by law*. Jesus' distinction between God and Caesar would apply here:

rebellion against the person of Jesus Christ was committed in defiance of greater revelation than Adam had been given.

54. Prior to the Mosaic law, there were such priests: e.g., Melchizedek, Jethro, and Balaam. Balaam was the last of them, a transitional figure who apostatized in his confrontation with Moses, yet who still possessed powers and insights given to him by God. These priests, who were outside the ethnic boundaries of the people of Israel, had been granted their legal status by God prior to the establishment of the geographical boundaries of national Israel.

render to each what is lawfully claimed by each (Matt. 22:21).[55] God is sacred; Caesar is common. (It was this confession that later became the legal basis of the Roman Empire's persecution of Christians.) Jesus' distinction between God and mammon would not apply here: no one should ever serve mammon. No one should ever become profane (Mammon: false worship). What was established in Leviticus 5:14–19 was a legal distinction between sacred and common, not between sacred and profane. *That which is common cannot be profaned.*

What did the church in the Mosaic Covenant require? The sacrifice of unblemished animals, for one thing. What if a man had ignorantly offered an animal with a defect—a disease, for example? He had mistakenly brought the wrong animal to the altar. He owed another animal, plus a penalty payment of one-fifth. Since he could not kill one-fifth of an animal, a monetary equivalent according to the shekels of the temple was allowed. To offer a blemished animal was the equivalent of stealing from God—profaning His table-altar (Mal. 1:8–12). God's warning was clear: "But ye have profaned it, in that ye say, The table of the LORD is polluted; and the fruit thereof, even his meat, is contemptible" (Mal. 1:12).

What else would have come under the law against profanity? Tithes. The tithes were to be set aside to God. They were His property, collected and administered solely by the Levites. To refuse to pay a tithe to the local Levite was the legal equivalent of stealing from God (Mal. 3:8–9). If a person discovered in retrospect that he had earned more net income than he had originally calculated, he owed more to God. This would have been an unintentional transgression. He now owed the tithe, plus an animal sacrifice, plus an extra 20% on that portion of the tithe that he had neglected to pay. If he had earned an additional ten ounces of silver, he owed, first, an additional ounce to the Levite. He would also have been required to offer an animal sacrifice, plus pay an additional one-fifth of an ounce to the Levite.

A person might also have made a complicated vow to God. If he neglected to fulfill all of its terms, he would have owed the extra payment.

55. Gary North, *Priorities and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Matthew*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2000] 2012), ch. 44. Because God places Caesars on the throne who unlawfully claim far more than a tithe, we are usually to obey even the unlawful claims. God brings such men to power in order to judge us. However, God allowed Jeroboan to revolt against Rehoboam in protest against Rehoboam's taxes (I Kings 12).

J. New Covenant Sanctions

In the New Covenant era, as in the Mosaic era, the *general status* of priest, which is inherited by all men from Adam through physical birth, must be distinguished from (1) the *special status* of priest, which is inherited from Jesus Christ, the second Adam (I Cor. 15:45), through legal adoption (Eph. 1:3–6), and also from (2) the *judicial office of priest*, which is obtained only through ecclesiastical ordination. The first distinction between the priesthoods—special priest vs. general priest—reflects the fundamental difference between heaven and hell: saved and lost. The general priesthood is profane (heirs of Adam's transgression); the special priesthood is not profane (heirs of God's redemptive grace). This is not a marginal distinction. It marks a radical judicial distinction that far exceeds the distinction between the ordained church officer and the layman. The eternal sanctions are very different, so the degree of violation is different.

The second distinction is marginal: *ordained* special priest (guardian of the sacraments) vs. *non-ordained* special priest (guardian of the kingdom). The differing sanctions of Leviticus 5:14–19 reflect this marginal difference. In the Mosaic era, a profane act of transgression of the *holy things* committed in ignorance was of marginally greater magnitude than a violation of the commandments committed in ignorance. The first required a ram plus a 20% penalty (Lev. 5:16); the second did not: ram only (v. 18).

Today, pagans and priests are mixed together geographically. How could a covenant-breaker ("Adamic priest") commit an unintentional act of sacrilege? There are no animal sacrifices today. He is not covenantally under the church. He does not pay tithes. He does not make vows to the church. There seems to be no easy way for him to commit an unintentional profane act. One example would be the case of a person who takes communion without being a church member, not understanding that to do so lawfully, he needs to be under church authority as a member. (Churches that practice open communion lure ignorant people into profanity.) But what would be the penalty? An additional one-fifth of what? Another example would be verbal profanity: calling down God's negative sanctions against another person. Only ordained priests may do this publicly. In a culture in which such language has become common, this practice can become habitual, i.e., unintentional. It can go on only where biblical law is not enforced.

The civil government of every nation should impose sanctions

against public verbal profanity, which is a form of assault. *The third commandment is binding on all nations.* No one is allowed by God to transgress the boundary placed around His name. No civil government ought to tolerate such transgressions. The inherited general status of priest to which all men are born as sons of Adam brings all men under God's civil laws regarding profanity. It is on this legal basis, among others, that the civil government of a formally covenanted Christian nation could and should bring sanctions against certain practices of cults and rival religions: their public transgression of God's sacramental boundaries. *Sacrilege is a civil offense.*

This fact is denied by defenders of religious pluralism, who regard pluralism as the civil manifestation of the sacred in history. This is why pluralism is in principle a violation of the third commandment. A refusal to defend God's sacred boundaries places the civil magistrate, who acts as an ordained representative of both God[56] and society, in the legal position of an accomplice of those who do transgress them. Pluralism is a civil order that is established judicially by taking God's name in vain: the invocation of an oath to a false god who threatens to impose non-biblical sanctions.[57]

Unintentional sacrilege seems far less likely in a modern nation that is not formally covenanted to God. That it could take place in Old Covenant Israel is clear. It is far less clear how laws against unintentional violations of priestly boundaries would apply today.

With this understanding of the sacred, we are now ready to investigate a series of false distinctions: ancient and modern, sectarian and academic, and fundamentalist-pietist. They must all be avoided if we are to do justice to the biblical distinction between sacred and common.

K. False Distinctions: Ancient and Modern Religion

There is no doubt that the realm of the sacred in ancient Israel was located inside specified geographical boundaries. The Bible does not

56. On the ministerial office of the civil magistrate: "For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil" (Rom. 13:3–4). Gary North, *Cooperation and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Romans*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press [2000] 2012), ch. 11.

57. Gary North, *Political Polytheism: The Myth of Pluralism* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1989).

even remotely suggest, however, that the larger realm outside these special geographical boundaries was an *inferior* place in terms of its inherent "being." If anything, the closer a man dwelt to sacred space in the Mosaic Covenant era, the more vulnerable he became to God's judgments. This is why an unpremeditated and unintentional violation of God's holy things bore an additional penalty of 20%—not overwhelming, but nonetheless a penalty. The sacred was a zone or object of greater ritual precision and deeper foreboding. It was something surrounded by a judicial boundary. What was to be feared here was the possibility of committing a profane act.

This biblical distinction between the *judicially sacred* and the *judicially common* has been subtly transformed by those affirming very different theological categories. Those who promote counterfeit covenants have attempted to shift the ***sacred-common distinction*** to either a *magical-metaphysical* view (realism/organicism) or a *symbolic-psychological* view (nominalism/mechanism). Both approaches are theologically incorrect.

1. Realism: Sacred vs. Profane (Re-defined)

The Bible's judicial distinction—ritually and *representatively*—between the sacred and the non-sacramental (i.e., common) has almost universally been redefined as a contrast between the sacred and the profane, with anything that is not sacred defined as inherently profane. This is a very serious misunderstanding of the Bible's distinctions: sacred vs. common and sacred vs. profane. Adopting the familiar but erroneous distinction of sacred vs. profane, Hastings' *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* comments:

> The etymology of the word "profane" (lit. "before *or* in front of the shrine") may give us a certain amount of guidance because of its spatial suggestiveness. There immediately arises in our minds the idea of a walled or fenced enclosure within which only peculiarly precious objects and specially privileged persons may remain, and outside of which there is a world of rigorously excluded persons and things having lesser assigned worth than those within. . . . Another idea, related to the foregoing and also suggested by the spatial etymology of the word 'profane,' is that of absolute, abrupt, and rigorous separation between the sacred and the profane. The sacred enclosure is definitely separated by [a] wall or some other effective protection from the profane world, and access from the one world to the other is only through a rigorously-guarded portal.[58]

58. "Profanity," in *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, ed. James Hastings, 12 vols. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1918), X, pp. 378, 379.

According to this view, the barrier marking off sacred space from profane space may be verbal, spatial, temporal, ritual, or a combination. A taboo marks the dividing line—*line* in this case may be metaphorical—between the two realms. The priesthood becomes a separate class of people based on their God-given access to the holy or set-apart objects. "Everywhere also elaborate ritual is accompanied by the most zealous care for the separation of the priestly class from the ordinary community."[59] The priests dwell in sacred space. Everyone else dwells in profane space.

The space outside of sacred space is seen as "the profane world." It is therefore unclean, cursed, or in other ways a second-class place of residence. Those who live there are themselves second-class citizens. There is supposedly a *chain of being* linking the higher realm of the sacred to the lower realm of the profane. Those dwelling in the "upper story" of the sacred possess more power and authority than those in the "lower story" of the profane. The sacred realm of "grace" is contrasted with the profane realm of "nature." Grace is seen as metaphysically superior to nature, but it is the dwelling place of the few: the priesthood. Nature is seen as the dwelling place for the masses, where popular culture prevails.

The Bible denies all this. It presents the entire world as under the grace of God, from the day that God clothed Adam in animal skins and sent him out of the garden. The garden was too holy for Adam and his heirs because it contained the tree of life, but the realm beyond the garden's boundaries was in no way profane. It was common when compared to the garden; it was not profane. Both the garden and the world outside were equally part of nature: the created realm. The garden, however, was off-limits judicially because the tree of life was off-limits, just as the tree of the knowledge of good and evil had been off-limits. Adam had defied the earlier verbal boundary; this time, God placed angels and a flaming sword at the gate of entry (Gen. 3:24). The garden was holy; the world outside was common; but the world outside was not in any way profane.

(a) Nature and Grace

Given a false, metaphysical view of the sacred and the profane, men erroneously believe that *nature swallows up grace* in the realm of popular culture. Because nature is supposedly the larger realm outside the narrowly circumscribed sacred boundaries, it then becomes

59. *Ibid.*, X, p. 380.

the dominant force in culture. Its laws are less rigorous, which means that its standards—ethical or ritual—are lower. Nevertheless, the realm of nature is inevitably dominant in culture, for its domain is far larger geographically and encompasses most people. In short, *that which is inferior metaphysically becomes dominant culturally*.

This false distinction between the sacred as a realm of existence for a religious elite and the profane as a separate realm of existence for the masses is an important key to a proper understanding of all non-Christian religions. In them, nature always swallows up grace. There is no hope for the masses of men. Nature controls them, even though they may seek to control nature. The *historical* power of the *historical* resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ is denied by such religions. That which is identified as the realm of grace—assuming such a realm is even admitted to exist—is believed to have authority and power only within the necessarily narrow boundaries of the sacred. *Covenant-breaking man's goal is to restrict the influence of the sacred*. Why? Because of its supernatural power and because of its superior moral authority. The sacred implies transcendent law, and transcendent law implies transcendent judgment. *Covenant-breaking man's primary goal in life is to avoid transcendent judgment*. He re-invents physical reality in order to further this goal.[60] In order to remove the sacred from his presence, he is also willing to redefine the biblical categories of sacred and profane, making the sacred a superior but completely separate realm which is closed to most people.

(b) Escaping Grace

Covenant-breaking man frequently seeks to deny the existence of grace. Men deny the relevance of *God's grace in history* because they deny the relevance of *God's wrath in eternity*. One cosmological approach denies the existence of the permanent judicial boundary separating history from heaven. The other approach denies the existence of eternity. The best example of the first is Hinduism. The best example of the second is humanism.

Hinduism is normally viewed as a deeply spiritual religion. It is deeply spiritual; it is nevertheless anti-grace. For the Hindu, nature is the realm of the masses; it is also the realm of illusion (*maya*). The true spiritual master is self-consciously involved in a lifetime pilgrimage—indeed, several thousand lifetime pilgrimages—to escape from the illusion of nature by becoming one with the non-historical Ulti-

60. North, *Is the World Running Down?*, pp. 63–64.

mate, in which all spatial and temporal distinctions disappear. But there is no grace in the system; the process is rigorously governed by *karma*—the impersonal ethical law of reincarnation. The spiritual goal is total escape from history.

The other representative way of denying grace is modern humanism. Men are told that there is no escape from history, meaning no grace that transcends it. The humanist's universe is a closed system: closed to God. There is only death, both individual and cosmic (the heat death of the universe).[61]

In both systems—spiritual Hinduism and materialist humanism—grace is not seen as a culture-transforming power in history. In the first system, God pays no attention to history, not having any conscious attention to pay. In the second system, there is no God to pay attention.

The gods of ancient paganism were either animistic or civic. They were either gods of the household, including the fields within the household's boundaries, or else they were gods of the *polis*. They were not universal gods, except to the extent that a king might extend his personal power across geographical boundaries. The great chain of being encompassed warring gods and warring men. *The gods manifested their power through specific men or cities*. When a city lost a war, its gods also lost the war.[62] Thus, the realm of the sacred was reflected in the affairs of the supposedly profane. It was believed by all except the Hebrews that mankind could call upon no god that is simultaneously personal and absolute.[63] Nature alone was seen as absolute, but impersonal. Nature eventually would swallow up grace. Stoicism and Epicureanism are examples of later classical ethical-philosophical systems in which grace disappeared.

2. Nominalism: Religious vs. Secular

Biblically speaking, everything is at bottom religious, for the whole creation is under God, both metaphysically (being) and cov-

61. *Ibid*., ch. 2.

62. Numa Denis Fustel de Coulanges, *The Ancient City: A Study on the Religion, Laws, and Institutions of Greece and Rome* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday Anchor, [1864] 1955), III:XV.

63. Wrote theologian John Frame: "The non-Christian, of course, can accept an absolute only if that absolute is impersonal and therefore makes no demands and has no power to bless or curse. There are personal gods in paganism, but none of them is absolute; there are absolutes in paganism, but none is personal. Only in Christianity (and in other religions influenced by the Bible) is there such a concept as a 'personal absolute.'" John M. Frame, *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God* (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1987), p. 17.

enantally (judicially). God created the cosmos, which is forever distinct from the unique being of God. *There is a **Creator-creature distinction**.*[64] Everything is therefore supposed to be formally and publicly acknowledged as being under God covenantally. But covenant-breaking man refuses to acknowledge that he lives under such a covenantal requirement. He seeks other gods to serve—gods that will respond to his authority and his ritual manipulations.

Covenantal subordination is built into the creation.[65] There is an inescapable hierarchy in all existence. There is no escape from some form of covenantal subordination, meaning *religious* subordination; men serve either God or mammon (Matt. 6:24).[66] Men see themselves and the world around them through religiously tinted spectacles. They view the world as covenantal subordinates of God or Satan.[67]

In contrast, very few of life's activities are sacred. That which is sacramental is narrowly defined by God; it refers exclusively to the church of Jesus Christ in its unique, monopolistic capacity as the guardian and administrator of the sacraments. The church's administration of the sacraments corresponds to the priestly activities of circumcision and Passover in the Mosaic Covenant. While the head of the household was involved in both rituals, he administered the rites only in his judicial capacity as a household priest. He was always under formal ecclesiastical sanctions.

(a) Kant's Dialectic: Phenomenal/Noumenal

In modern thought, including modern fundamentalism, there is a familiar theme of "religious vs. secular."[68] That which is secular is defined as non-religious. The term "secular" is used as a substitute for man's autonomy. Secularism is inherently atheistic. Secular man assumes that atheism is the antithesis of religion, when it in fact is a deeply religious worldview.[69] This usage is colored by the presupposition of modern man that *religion* is the way of the *subordinate* per-

64. Cornelius Van Til, *An Introduction to Systematic Theology*, vol. V of *In Defense of Biblical Christianity (*Phillipsburg, New Jersey: Presbyterian & Reformed, [1961] 1978), pp. 11–12.

65. Sutton, *That You May Prosper*, ch. 2.

66. North, *Priorities and Dominion*, ch. 14.

67. Jordan, *Through New Eyes*.

68. Gary North, "Publisher's Foreword," *House Divided: The Break-Up of Dispensational Theology*, by Greg L. Bahnsen and Kenneth L. Gentry (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1989), pp. xii–xix.

69. Herbert Schlossberg, *Idols for Destruction: Christian Faith and Its Confrontation with American Society* (Westchester, Illinois: Crossway, [1983] 1993).

son, who labors under non-scientific, non-physical restrictions, while the *secular* is the equivalent of *autonomous*. This dualism is basically a development of Kant's dialectic between the phenomenal and the noumenal.[70] The phenomenal realm is non-religious, autonomous, and secular: the deterministic realm of impersonal scientific cause and effect. The noumenal is the realm of the spiritual, the ethical, the irrational, the "uncaused," i.e., human freedom.[71]

In both realms, noumenal and phenomenal, man is understood to be spiritually autonomous. Insofar as he dwells in the noumenal, Kantian man is responsible only to himself. Insofar as he dwells in the phenomenal, he is not responsible at all. He is the impersonally determined, cosmically irresponsible product of this world's cause-and-effect forces. *In neither case is he responsible to a Creator God*. The "religious" realm is just another side of autonomous man: the nonrational side. It is to this extent inherently *secular*. Thus, modern usage misleads us: *the "religious" in Kant's world is as autonomous as the secular*. The noumenal and the phenomenal represent two different, dialectical sides of man's autonomy.[72]

(b) The Denial of Hierarchy

What modern man denies with all his heart is the existence of a realm of *judicial subordination* to a God who judges men both in time and eternity. It is this condition of judicial subordination that Jesus warned His disciples to consider: "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matt. 10:28). Modern man rejects such a hierarchical view of man's place in the cosmos. This rejection of God's sanctions has colored modern thought so completely that even Christians are doubtful that God brings predictable sanctions in history, and some Christian scholars actually deny that He does.[73]

Nevertheless, there is no escape from hierarchy. It is a *chain of com-*

70. Richard Kroner, *Kant's Weltanschauung* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, [1914] 1956).

71. Quantum physics represents the invasion of the phenomenal by the noumenal. See North, *Is the World Running Down?*, ch. 1; Fred Alan Wolfe, *Taking the Quantum Leap: The New Physics for Non-Scientists* (New York: Harper & Row, 1989). So does the newly developing chaos theory, pioneered by mathematician Benoit Mandelbrot. James Gleick, *Chaos: Making a New Science* (New York: Viking, 1987).

72. Cornelius Van Til, *A Christian Theory of Knowledge* (Phillipsburg, Jew Jersey: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1969), pp. 63–64.

73. North, *Millennialism and Social Theory*, ch. 7.

mand, not a chain of being. Man is under God; nature is under man; but God is not part of the "being" of man or nature. The God of the Bible is in no sense the god of pantheism. He is a covenantal God who issues commands through judicial representatives. Man will never become God, issuing orders as an ultimate sovereign, for man cannot evolve into God or replace God through revolution. The Mormons have a slogan: "What God is, man will become; what man is, God once was." This is incorrect. What God is, man can never become. But here Christianity breaks with both Judaism and Islam, for Christianity teaches that what man is, the Son of God once was in history, and more than what man is: perfectly human, yet also divine, without intermixture. So announced the Athanasian creed (*c.* 450 A.D.).[74]

Covenant-breaking man denies this chain of command, preferring instead the idea of a chain of being.[75] The chain-of-being philosophy of ancient paganism is reincarnated in modern humanism. Modern man simply inverts the chain-of-being hierarchy that prevails in pagan religions. Unlike the older pagan view, where the sacred was viewed as superior to the profane, for Enlightenment man the religious is subordinate to the secular. The "real world" is the realm of science and mathematics, of stock market profits and physical fitness exercises—what Sorokin called sensate culture.[76] The not-so-real world is said to be the realm of religion: prayers, rituals, dreams of heaven to come, and "pie in the sky by and by"—contemptuously dismissed as the realm of children and old women (of both sexes). It is the realm of symbols: meaningful only to those who believe in them, unlike the supposedly universal authority of reason and mathematics.[77] Those who dwell in the religious realm are generally thought of as failures: people who could not compete successfully in the real world, and who fled to the symbolic in search of "higher" meaning—a meaning that cannot be expressed in real-world categories, but which is invented by the very participants.

The great German sociologist Max Weber was impaled on the

74. R. J. Rushdoony, *Foundations of Social Order: Studies in the Creeds and Councils of the Early Church* (Vallecito, California: Ross House, [1968] 1998), p. 70.

75. Arthur Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, [1936] 1960).

76. Pitirim A. Sorokin, *The Crisis of Our Age* (New York: Dutton, [1941] 1957), ch. 3.

77. As to why mathematics, which is a construct of the human mind, should have any relationship to the physical world, let alone govern any aspect of the cosmos, humanists cannot say. Nobel Prize-winning physicist Eugene Wigner pointed this out: Wigner, "The Unreasonable Effectiveness of Mathematics in the Natural Sciences," *Communications in Pure and Applied Mathematics*, XIII (1960), pp. 1–14.

horns of this dilemma—this inherent *philosophical dualism*—of modern humanism. He contrasted the sublime with the rational, yet he regarded the sublime as the realm of the weak. First, the *sublime*: "The fate of our times is characterized by rationalization and intellectualization and, above all, by the 'disenchantment of the world.' Precisely the ultimate and most sublime values have retreated from public life either into the transcendental realm of mystic life or into the brotherliness of direct and personal human relations." Then, a few lines later, the *weak*: "To the person who cannot bear the fate of the times like a man, one must say: may he rather return silently, without the usual publicity build-up of renegades, but simply and plainly. The arms of the old churches are opened widely and compassionately for him. After all, they do not make it hard for him. One way or another he has to bring his 'intellectual sacrifice'—that is inevitable. If he can really do it, we shall not rebuke him."[78] On the contrary, from the rationalists of the Enlightenment to *Humanist Manifesto* II,[79] those who do return to Christianity's supernaturalism are severely rebuked. Being dismissed as a weakling and a coward is a form of rebuke.

(c) Sacred and Secular

The humanist insists that there is no essential (metaphysical) distinction between the secular and the religious. The realm of religion is regarded as a realm of man's invention. It is "merely" a realm of symbol and myth, of mystery and imagination. The many distinctions between the religious and the secular realms are explained as strictly *nominal*: named by men rather than real. Modern man believes that the noumenal is merely nominal. Modern man is usually a nominalist, not a realist. The realm of grace is understood as being no different at bottom (metaphysically) from the realm of nature, and therefore the realm of grace is an illusion: *secularizing the sacred*. If the reality of the bizarre intrudes on the boundaries of science so that a few scientists on the fringes of science can no longer ignore the evidence, they can

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78. Max Weber, "Science as a Vocation" (1918), *From Max Weber: Essays on Sociology*, eds. H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946), p. 155 Within two decades of Weber's call for the emotionally weak to return to the traditional churches, the Protestant churches had been completely corrupted morally by their compromises with Hitler, who required all Germans to greet each other with a public salutation, "heil Hitler"—salvation Hitler. After World War II, the German Protestant state church became completely liberal theologically.

79. "Humanist Manifesto II," *The Humanist*, XXXIII (Oct. 1973); reprinted in *Humanist Manifestos* I and II (Buffalo, New York: Prometheus Books, [1973] 1985), pp. 13–23.

stretch the definition of nature so as to include the attributes of the occult and abnormal.[80]

But there has long been an underground humanist alternative to this strategy: *sacralizing the secular*.[81] The believer in magic sees a link between man and the cosmos that is based on ritual formulas rather than scientific formulas. This view of man is called realism. What man does on earth mirrors the realm above man and invokes the powers thereof. But there is a metaphysical continuum: the chain of being. Man is not fundamentally different from nature and the supernatural. He is seen as the supreme link between nature and the supernatural. He does not name nature (nominalism)—does not define it through the power of his reason—but he commands both nature and the supernatural through the power open to him through special knowledge possessed by the adept. The goal of the magician, like the goal of the scientist, is control over nature. This is why the two realms of ritual magic and of scientific humanism are not inherently separate realms.[82]

One's choice between these two options makes little difference for the Bible's theology of redemption. Both views—nominalism and realism—are anti-covenantal. They both rebel against the idea of an absolute judicial hierarchy: God over man. The Bible teaches that nature cannot swallow up grace in history, for God is over nature and sustains it by grace. In contrast, whether occult forces invade nature by cloaking themselves in the garb of the Kantian noumenal realm,[83] or whether the Kantian phenomenal realm of rationally defined *and constructed* impersonal nature pushes back the mysterious to the edges of man's existence, nature always swallows up grace.

The god of deism is too far away to transform man or nature. The god of pantheism is too immersed in nature to transform man or nature. The gods of animism are at best local forces, too weak to guaran-

80. Thelma Moss, *The Probability of the Impossible: Scientific Discoveries and Explorations in the Psychic World* (Los Angeles: Tarcher, 1974); Lyall Watson, *Supernature* (Garden City, New York: Anchor/Doubleday, 1973). Louis Pauwels and Jacques Bergier, *Impossible Probabilities* (New York: Stein & Day, [1968] 1971) seems more occult than scientific, but the book is structured as a popular scientific work.

81. Stephen A. McKnight, *Sacralizing the Secular: The Renaissance Origins of Modernity* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1989).

82. Gary North, *Unholy Spirits: Occultism and New Age Humanism* (Ft. Worth, Texas: Dominion Press, 1986).

83. An example of this is Freudian psychology and especially Jungian. Man's subconscious or unconscious—personal (Freud) or collective (Jung)—becomes the doorway of the occult, both in theory and practice.

tee man's salvation. In the world of atheism, God does not exist, nor does the realm of grace. There is only the realm of nature. Therefore, in all covenant-breaking thought, nature always swallows up grace.[84]

This view of history is not limited to humanism. A similar view exists in modern Christianity. It begins with the same false nature/grace distinction. It confuses the Bible's common/sacred distinction with nature and grace. It equates common with nature, sacred with grace.

L. False Distinctions Within Modern Academia

A strictly spatial or cultural distinction between the sacred and the profane is too "primitive" a distinction to suit modern humanist man. Modern humanist man has abandoned the concept of the profane, except for certain acts that are seen as *politically* profane. Nazism, for example, is regarded today as politically profane, when it in fact was biblically profane: a pagan religion.[85] Modern man has invented another distinction to satisfy his need to distinguish between the sacred and the common. He contrasts the sacred with the secular. In this, he shares the belief of modern fundamentalism. In this section, I survey an example of modern humanistic scholarship's re-definition of biblical categories: sacred and profane.

I need to repeat myself: *the realm of the sacred should not be contrasted with a [hypothetical] realm called the profane*. The sacred or sacramental realm is properly contrasted to the common or non-sacramental realm. Anything that is profane is the result of a boundary violation of the sacred by something that is common.

A great deal of confusion about this point has been generated by two separate sources within modern academia. First, standard historical and anthropological accounts of religion have been written from the point of view of a false dualism between sacred and profane: the magical realm of the priest, the shaman, or the possessed vs. the sec-

84. Even in animist systems, the gods are part of nature, affected by what goes on in history, using nature as their means of imposing sanctions. The idea of a sovereign Mother Nature generally lies behind the local gods of animism.

85. On the anti-Christian aspects of Nazi theology, see Thomas Schirrmacher, "National Socialism As Religion," *Chalcedon Report* (Nov. 1992). He pointed out that the "heil" of "Heil Hitler!" meant *salvation*. It was required by law as a public greeting. Small children at school were told before each meal: "Fold your hands, bow your heads and think about Adolph Hitler. He gives us our daily bread and helps us out of every misery." Schirrmacher offers many other examples of Nazi theology. Modern scholarship has produced a huge quantity of studies on Nazi politics; it has produced almost nothing on Nazi religion.

ular realm of the non-initiated.[86] Second, a similar distinction is basic to modern sociological theory: sacred vs. secular.[87] This distinction in twentieth-century sociological thought was pioneered by Émile Durkheim, who was Numa Fustel de Coulanges' most famous disciple.[88] His influence on this point has been enormous, a fact rarely recognized by the international academic community, which still lives under his spell and the spell of his many disciples in many fields.[89] Nisbet wrote: "Of all concepts and perspectives in Durkheim the sacred is the most striking and, given the age in which he lived, the most radical."[90]

1. Durkheim's False Dualism: Sacred/Profane

Durkheim established the terms of sociological discourse on the sacred-profane dichotomy in 1912, in Book I, Chapter I of his book on Australian aboriginal religion, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*: "All known religious beliefs, whether simple or complex, present one common characteristic: they presuppose a classification of all the things, real and ideal, of which men think, into two classes or opposed groups, generally designated by two distinct terms which are translated well enough by the words *profane* and *sacred*. This division of the world into two domains, the one containing all that is sacred, the other all that is profane, is the distinctive trait of religious thought; . . . ."[91] Durkheim did not qualify or tone down this dichotomy in any way, writing that "*it is absolute*. In all the history of human thought there exists no other example of two categories of things so profoundly differentiated or so radically opposed to one another. The traditional opposition of good and bad is nothing beside this; for the good and the bad are only two opposed species of the same class, namely morals, just as sickness and health are two different aspects of the same order

86. Mircea Eliade, *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*, trans. Willard Trask (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1964).

87. Robert A. Nisbet, *The Sociological Tradition* (New York: Basic Books, 1966), p. 222.

88. *Ibid*., pp. 226, 243–51.

89. Nisbet wrote: "More than any other figure in the history of sociology, Émile Durkheim seems to embody what has proved to be conceptually most distinctive in the field and most fertile in its contribution to other modern disciplines. Durkheim, it might be said, is the complete sociologist." Nisbet, "Introduction," *Émile Durkheim* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1965), p. 1. He continued: "That he was a masterful teacher is witnessed by the long list of important works in almost every field of scholarship—history, economics, psychology, law, government—written by men who acknowledged him as their teacher." *Idem*.

90. Nisbet, *Sociological Tradition*, p. 243.

91. Émile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, trans. Joseph Ward Swain (New York: Free Press, [1915] 1965), p. 52.

of facts, life, while the sacred and the profane have always and everywhere been conceived by the human mind as two distinct classes, as two worlds between which there is nothing in common."[92]

The problem for the sociologist or anthropologist who accepts Durkheim's classification of sacred and profane is to identify the operational and theoretical boundaries between the two realms. What is the nature of such boundaries? How can anyone pass between them without becoming ritually polluted? How can anyone ever escape living in the realm of the profane? Durkheim understood the problem: "This is not equivalent to saying that a being can never pass from one of these worlds into the other: but the manner in which this passage is effected, when it does take place, puts into relief the essential duality of the two kingdoms."[93] Authorizing a person's move from the profane realm into the sacred realm is the basis of ritual initiation, he argued. The individual is *metaphysically* transformed by means of ritual: from a profane being into a religious being. "Does this not prove that between the profane being which he was and the religious being which he becomes, there is a break of continuity?"[94]

Durkheim had the biblical categories of sacred and profane almost exactly backwards. What he described is the metaphysical dualism hypothesized by theories of ritual magic. In the Bible, it is nowhere asserted that a person is profane prior to his ritual transformation, becoming sacred—a "religious being"—by means of the ritual. On the contrary, in biblical religion, an inescapably religious being—man—becomes profane *but remains religious* when he violates a boundary separating the judicially sacred from the judicially common. In the Old Covenant, he profaned "sacred space" when he crossed such a boundary, and in doing so, became profane himself. There was and is nothing profane about the realm outside the boundary of the sacred. Whatever is *inside* the boundary can become profane—ritually polluted—when someone who is not authorized to enter the sacred space crosses the boundary. That which is *sacred*, meaning that which is associated with the *sacraments*, can become profane only through a ritually prohibited act of trespass. What must be understood from the beginning of sociological analysis is this: in biblical religion, *everything outside and inside the boundary is equally religious*. Everything is under covenantal subordination to the Creator God.

92. *Ibid.*, pp. 53–54.
93. *Ibid.*, p. 54.
94. *Idem*.

2. Religious vs. Secular

One result of Durkheim's false classification of sacred and profane has been the reinforcement of that other false dualism: the religious vs. the secular. We can see the connection between these two false dualisms in this statement from Durkheim: "The two worlds are not only conceived of as separate, but as even hostile and jealous rivals of each other. Since men cannot fully belong to one except on condition of leaving the other completely, they are exhorted to withdraw themselves completely from the profane world in order to lead an exclusively religious life."[95] He identified monasticism and mystical asceticism as examples of this withdrawal.[96]

This "religious-secular" dualism, like the "sacred-profane" dualism, also falls into contradictions. Again and again, the supposedly autonomous secular realm is found to be infused with religion or even undergirded by it.[97] This mixing of the two realms points back to Durkheim's original theoretical error: a false dualism between the sacred as a realm vs. the profane as a separate realm. Biblically, the sacred is one judicial realm; the common is another. The sacred is distinguished from the common by the *unique **judicial** presence of God*. The profane is not a separate realm. It is *violated sacred space*.

Some recent scholars have recognized that Durkheim's sharp antithesis between the sacred and the profane cannot be maintained, either conceptually or historically.[98] Nevertheless, this false dualism is sometimes imported into Christians' discussions of society. It reinforces the other dualism: *religious vs. secular*. This false dualism has undermined Christian social theory for almost a millennium. I refer to the common view of ecclesiastical service to God as the only truly full-time Christian service. It goes back to the medieval church's view of the ordained ministry as superior morally and not just institutionally.

M. "Full-Time Christian Service"

One of the most debilitating errors of modern fundamentalism is its specific misinterpretation of the distinction between sacred and common. There is a legitimate distinction between them, as we have seen: a

95. *Ibid*., p. 55.
96. *Idem*.
97. Nisbet, *Sociological Tradition*, pp. 229–31.
98. Cf. W. E. H. Stanmer, "Reflections on Durkheim and Aboriginal Religion" (1967); reprinted in *Durkheim on religion: A selection of readings and bibliographies*, ed. S. F. Pickering (Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975), pp. 291–96.

distinction relating to the office of priest. In the New Covenant order, the ordained church elder is worthy of double honor (I Tim. 5:17).[99] He is a minister. He does not offer sacrifice, but he still maintains the Mosaic Covenant's priestly function: guarding access to the sacraments.[100] The distinction between priest and non-priest in the New Covenant era is based on election to office. It is an explicitly *judicial* distinction.

Because of modern fundamentalism's acceptance of humanism's false metaphysical dualism—*religious* (grace/sacred) vs. *secular* (common/nature), i.e., noumenal vs. phenomenal—the fundamentalist speaks of a unique specialized calling: full-time Christian service. Only an *elite minority* can be involved in such service: the realm of grace. This minority is to that extent regarded as sacred, even though the fundamentalist definition includes non-ministerial callings in its classification of full-time Christian service. The Protestant doctrine of "every redeemed man a priest" is abandoned. This dualism implies that full-time work outside of the ministry is not full-time Christian service. It implies that all occupations besides that of the ordained priest-minister are somehow not expressly Christian, or at best, less deeply Christian. This creates a major theoretical problem: how to explain women as being lawfully eligible to become involved in full-time Christian service, since most theologically conservative denominations refuse to ordain women as ministers.

Biblically speaking, these are unquestionably *common* occupations, i.e., they are not sacramental.[101] But almost nothing in life has ever been sacramental. Even in the garden of Eden, only two trees were sacramental. Everything else in the garden and the world was common. All of the creation was religious, however. *Administering the creation lawfully mandated full-time, covenant-keeping service*. All of life was under God's covenant. In this sense, nothing fundamental has changed; only the boundaries have shifted.

The fundamentalist's distinction between full-time Christian ser-

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99. Gary North, *Hierarchy and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on First Timothy*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2001] 2012), ch. 6.

100. This is why the office of chaplain can become biblically perverse if the civil covenant is elevated over the church covenant. If the chaplain is required by the armed forces to baptize the child of any serviceman who presents the child for baptism, irrespective of the serviceman's church membership or outward conduct, then the chaplain is being told to break the church's covenantal boundary. The same criticism can be applied to any pastor in a state-established church who is required to baptize any child merely because of its parents' political citizenship. To do so would be a profane act.

101. Writing this commentary is not sacramental. Neither is editing it, proofreading it, typesetting it, printing it, or writing advertising copy for it.

vice and, presumably, part-time Christian service implies that *everything outside the institutional church is secular*. A person is said to be in full-time Christian service only when he withdraws from this secular world. Such an outlook results in a drastic narrowing of the definition of the kingdom of God: a kingdom that supposedly operates only in the realms of the internal and the ecclesiastical. Only within the individual Christian heart and the four walls of some church building does the kingdom of God supposedly manifest itself. The definition of full-time Christian is usually widened to include non-profit activities in parachurch ministries, though no explanation is ever offered about how such a widened definition is theologically legitimate. The family may be included, but the state is always excluded. The state is seen as the realm of the natural, the common: *natural law*. The state is therefore exempted from the revealed law of God and removed from the realm of grace. There can be no redemption of the state. "Politics is dirty" pietists insist—inherently dirty. Problem: because the state is thereby granted judicial autonomy, it steadily swallows up grace by applying its common sanctions: against personal religious freedom, the independent church, and the Christian family.

This dualistic view of life can easily lead to mysticism. While the average fundamentalist might understand that covenantally faithful kings, soldiers, and even farmers under the Mosaic Covenant were involved in full-time service to God, he finds it difficult to grasp the fact that these same occupations today, plus all others not explicitly identified as immoral, require full-time Christian service. Fundamentalism's dualistic view of work militates against the idea of any explicitly Christian concept of culture until after the second coming of Christ.[102] In practice, it always means a withdrawal from culture.[103] This is pietism's theological legacy.[104]

Conclusion

A non-deliberate trespass of a holy thing required a 20% penalty payment plus a slain ram. A non-deliberate trespass of God's command-

102. The best-selling 1980s fundamentalist defender of this dualistic view of culture was Dave Hunt., e.g., *Whatever Happened to Heaven?* (Eugene, Oregon: Harvest House, 1988).

103. The willingness of modern American fundamentalists after about 1975 to get involved in cultural and political activities explicitly as Christians indicates a breakdown of the older theological viewpoint. If this continues, it will produce a major restructuring of fundamentalist theology, especially pretribulational dispensationalism. See North, "Publisher's Foreword," *House Divided*, pp. xviii–xix.

104. North, *Millennialism and Social Theory*, ch. 4.

ment required only a slain ram. The trespass of a holy thing was the greater (i.e., worse) trespass. The importance today of these two Levitical laws governing these two guilt offerings lies in their distinctions and varying penalties. The Levitical distinctions between "the holy things of the Lord" and "the commandments of the Lord" enable us to discern a fundamental distinction between the sacred and the non-sacramental (i.e., the common or conventional). The common is obviously not profane, for this realm includes God's commandments. There is surely nothing inherently profane about "the commandments of the Lord" or the comprehensive realms of life governed by them. What *is* profane is any transgression of "the holy things of the Lord." These Levitical laws therefore reveal the error of the standard textbook distinctions drawn between "sacred and profane" and "religious and secular."

The biblically valid distinction between the sacred and the non-sacramental reminds us that *all of nature is under grace*, either special or common. Without the unearned gifts (grace) of life, law, time, and knowledge, and power, there could be no history.[105] The processes of nature have been definitively redeemed by Jesus Christ by His death, resurrection, and ascension.[106] This is equally true of culture. The Bible is clear: nature is sustained by God's common grace and is progressively sanctified in history in response to His extension of special grace to the church. *Grace progressively redeems nature in history because Jesus Christ definitively redeemed nature at Calvary*. Nature is therefore sanctified in history: definitively and progressively. This is the biblical concept of corporate sanctification. It is essential for developing biblical social theory.

It is the task of Christians to work out progressively in history the implications of what these definitive transformations have already accomplished judicially. *Whatever God has declared judicially, He requires to be manifested progressively*. This dominion assignment to His people involves extensive personal responsibility, which is why dominion theology is resisted so adamantly by pietists. But the church has been given a written Bible, the Holy Spirit, and the division of labor (I Cor. 12)[107] to enable Christians to extend God's dominion covenant. This historical task is huge, but our tools are more than adequate. There is also plenty of time.[108]

105. North, *Dominion and Common Grace*.

106. North, *Is the World Running Down?*

107. Gary North, *Judgment and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on First Corinthians*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2001] 2012), ch. 15.

108. Kenneth L. Gentry, Jr., *He Shall Have Dominion: A Postmillennial Eschatology*, 2nd ed. (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1997).

Sadly, most Christians in my generation prefer intellectual slumber and life in a cultural ghetto, living on "hand-me-downs" from the world of humanism. They, too, have adopted the false dualisms of humanism: sacred vs. profane, religious vs. secular, nature vs. grace. They, too, have adopted the view that without Jesus' bodily presence in history, nature swallows up grace. They are also pessimillennialists.

Nature should not be contrasted with grace, for it is part of God's common grace and can be renewed (healed) over time through comprehensive covenantal faithfulness. *Nature should be contrasted with the sacramental: a judicially segregated realm. Both realms are equally under grace*. Therefore, nature (the common)—families, businesses, civil government, etc.—can be healed progressively in history by special grace. This is one application of the doctrine of the bodily ascension of Christ: overcoming death in history.

In contrast to the biblical view of nature and grace stand all forms of anti-Christianity. *In all non-Christian systems, nature swallows up grace in history*. Tragically for the history of the church, both amillennialism and premillennialism adopt this non-Christian view of nature and grace in history (i.e., the period prior to Jesus Christ's bodily return). The world supposedly remains under the accelerating curses of God, deteriorating both ethically and physically (the entropy process). The common blessings of God in history are progressively overwhelmed by the common curses.[109]

Nature does not swallow up grace. Nature is not separate from grace; nature is under grace. For example, all Christian service is un-

109. North, *Millennialism and Social Theory*, ch. 4. How there can be both economic growth and population growth over several centuries, including increasing per capita wealth, in a world of declining special grace and therefore (presumably) declining common grace, is a theoretical problem which amillennialists and premillennialists prudently ignore, given their view of history, wherein nature steadily swallows grace. The theonomic postmillennialist can point to the spread of social attitudes and civil laws in the West—right-wing Enlightenment thought: constitutionalism, contractualism, and capitalism ("common grace principles")—that are consistent with biblical law. External cultural obedience has brought external blessings, even in the face of a compromised and weakened church. In contrast, the systematic refusal of premillennialists and amillennialists to comment on this ethical-cultural relationship has left them incapable of affirming the details, or even the possibility, of an explicitly biblical social theory. This has been their dilemma for over three centuries. On the decline of Protestant casuistry—the application of general principles to concrete judicial cases in history—since the late seventeenth century, see Thomas Wood, *English Casuistical Divinity During the Seventeenth Century* (London: S.P.C.K., 1952), pp. 32–36. Roman Catholic casuistry began to fall into disfavor in the same era: Albert R. Johnson and Stephen Toulmin, *The Abuse of Casuistry: A History of Moral Reasoning* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), Pt. V.

der God's special grace. All Christian service is in this sense redemptive. When a Christian engages in any honest labor, he is engaged in full-time Christian service. But he is not engaged in full-time sacred service. Sacred service is limited to the performance of the formal duties of an ecclesiastical ministry: preaching the gospel in worship services, serving the sacraments, anointing the sick with oil (James 5:14), etc. Formal church worship involves an added layer of holiness, i.e., judicial separation. This is why the sacred can be profaned.

There is remarkably little discussion of the ascension of Christ in modern orthodox theology.[110] This topic inevitably raises fundamental historical, cosmological, and cultural implications that modern premillennial and especially amillennial theologians find difficult to accept, such as the progressive manifestation of Christ's rule in history through His representatives: Christians.[111] In a world in which grace is believed to be progressively devoured by nature, there is little room for historical applications of the doctrine of the historical ascension. Covenantal postmillennialism alone can confidently discuss the doctrine of Christ's ascension, for postmillennialism does not seek to confine the effects of Christ's ascension to the realms of the internal and the trans-historical.[112] That is to say, postmillennialism does not assert the existence of supposedly inevitable boundaries around the effects of grace in history. On the contrary, it asserts that all such boundaries will be progressively overcome in history, until on judgment day the very gates (boundaries) of hell will not be able to stand against the church (Matt. 16:18).[113]

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110. North, *Millennialism and Social Theory*, pp. 227–29.

111. No theological or eschatological school denies that there can be prolonged set-backs in this manifestation of Christ's rule. Conversely, none would totally deny progress. I know of no one who would argue, for example, that the creeds of the church prior to the fourth century were more rigorous or more accurate theologically than those that came later.

112. This is why amillennialism drifts so easily into Barthianism: the history of mankind for the amillennialist has no visible connection with the ascension of Jesus Christ. Progressive sanctification in this view is limited to the personal and ecclesiastical; it is never cultural or civic. The ascension of Christ has no transforming implications for society in amillennial theology. The ascension was both historical and publicly visible; its implications supposedly are not. The Barthian is simply more consistent than the amillennialist: he denies the historicity of both Jesus' ascension and His subsequent grace to society. Christ's ascension, like His grace, is relegated to the trans-historical. See North, *Millennialism and Social Theory*, pp. 111–13.

113. Gentry, *He Shall Have Dominion*, chaps. 12, 13.

7

GUARDIAN OF THE CIVIL OATH

And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, If a soul sin, and commit a trespass against the LORD, and lie unto his neighbour in that which was delivered him to keep, or in fellowship, or in a thing taken away by violence, or hath deceived his neighbour; Or have found that which was lost, and lieth concerning it, and sweareth falsely; in any of all these that a man doeth, sinning therein: Then it shall be, because he hath sinned, and is guilty, that he shall restore that which he took violently away, or the thing which he hath deceitfully gotten, or that which was delivered him to keep, or the lost thing which he found, Or all that about which he hath sworn falsely; he shall even restore it in the principal, and shall add the fifth part more thereto, and give it unto him to whom it appertaineth, in the day of his trespass offering. And he shall bring his trespass offering unto the LORD, a ram without blemish out of the flock, with thy estimation, for a trespass offering, unto the priest: And the priest shall make an atonement for him before the LORD: and it shall be forgiven him for any thing of all that he hath done in trespassing therein.

LEVITICUS 6:1–7

The theocentric meaning of this passage is that theft is a transgression against God.

A. God as the Victim of Crime

God is here identified as the primary victim of crime: "If a soul sin, and commit a trespass against the LORD. . . ." This principle of jurisprudence is fundamental to biblical law. Therefore, it is not sufficient for a thief to make restitution to his earthly victim; he must also make restitution to God.

This passage continues the laws governing trespasses and guilt (reparations) offerings. The sin in this instance is high-handed, un-

like the sin of Leviticus 5:15.[1] It is said to be a sin against the Lord, yet what is described is a sin against a neighbor. God mandated a 20% penalty plus the sacrifice of a blemish-free animal.

The text identifies the presence of a false oath in conjunction with crimes against property. The question is: Was the false oath the basis of the 20% penalty payment? I argue in this chapter that it was not. The false oath made mandatory the animal sacrifice, but the theft itself, confessed prior to the trial, was what invoked the 20% penalty. My line of reasoning rests on what I have previously identified as God's economic subsidy for early confession of crime, i.e., reduced restitution penalties.[2]

Deception is here singled out as a sin against the Lord. This includes deception regarding: (1) keeping an item entrusted for safekeeping or keeping a pledged item (collateral for a loan), (2) robbery, (3) extortion, and (4) keeping someone's lost item.[3] Theologically speaking, every sin is a sin against the Lord, to be judged in God's final court. The *victim* of every crime becomes God's *legal representative*, for he is an earthly target of man's rebellion against God's standards.[4] He is the victim, therefore, of a *boundary violation*. But this passage specifically identifies four transgressions as trespasses against God, whereas other trespasses listed in the Bible are not specifically identified as such. Why not? No ram offering was required for those other sins. Why not, if every sin is judicially a trespass against God? Why single out deception?

B. The Presence of a False Oath

The answer lies elsewhere than in the enumerated sins themselves. It is the transgressor's *false verbal testimony to the victim* regarding these *crimes against property* that serves as the differentiating factor: either lying to the neighbor directly or swearing falsely to a civil court. Wenham wrote: "By abusing the oath, a person took God's holy name in vain, and trespassed against his holiness. Therefore a reparation of-

1. "If a soul commit a trespass, and sin through ignorance, in the holy things of the Lord; then he shall bring for his trespass unto the Lord a ram without blemish out of the flocks, with thy estimation by shekels of silver, after the shekel of the sanctuary, for a trespass offering" (Lev. 5:15).

2. Gary North, *Authority and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Exodus* (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, 2012), Part 3: *Tools of Dominion* (1990), ch. 43:C.

3. The New American Standard Version makes these crimes clearer than the King James Version does.

4. North, *Authority and Dominion*, ch. 33:A.

fering was required to make amends."[5] The sin is two-fold: a violation of a neighbor's property rights (point three of the covenant: boundaries), coupled with a violation of either personal verbal assurances to the victim or the violation of a formal judicial oath (point four: oath).

Because a crime against property is involved, *the lie or deception becomes a judicial oath*. The victim becomes God's covenant agent, the one who initiates a lawsuit against the thief.[6] The oath violation takes a specific form: the implicit (though not legally explicit)[7] misuse of God's name. This is a boundary violation: the third commandment (Ex. 20:7).[8] This oath implicitly and inescapably invokes God's negative sanctions, as all unlawful oaths must.[9]

In a court, there must be interrogation of the suspects. God in the garden publicly interrogated Adam and Eve regarding the facts of the case. It is a crime to testify falsely in God's court or in man's. False testimony is intended to deflect God's justice. Offering it implies that God can be deceived, or at least, He can be deterred from bringing His negative sanctions in history. False testimony rests on a man's self-confidence in his ability to deceive God's representative agents in history. He believes that he can deflect or delay God's judgment in history by means of misleading information. This faith in false testimony rests on a theology that assumes that God is non-existent, or not omniscient, or not omnipotent, or does not bring significant negative sanctions in history. It assumes that heaven's court is non-existent, or that God is forgetful, or that time, apart from restitution, pays for all sins (universal salvation), i.e., that God does not bring negative sanctions in eternity. It assumes, at the very least, that God's negative sanctions outside the earthly court (in history and eternity) are minimal compared to the negative sanctions that can be imposed by the court, i.e., double restitution to the victim (Ex. 22:4).[10] This law denies all of these assumptions.

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5. Gordon J. Wenham, *The Book of Leviticus* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1979), p. 108.

6. North, *Authority and Dominion*, ch. 43.

7. Jesus warned men not to make oaths to each other: "But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil" (Matt. 5:37). He was not speaking of civil or ecclesiastical trials, in which an oath was legitimate because both state and church have been entrusted with the authority to bring God's negative sanctions in history.

8. North, *Authority and Dominion*, ch. 23.

9. Ray R. Sutton, *That You May Prosper: Dominion By Covenant*, 2nd ed.(Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, [1987] 1992), ch. 4.

10. North, *Authority and Dominion*, ch. 43.

C. Restitution and Atonement

Two separate sins were involved: one formal-covenantal (false oath), one conventional-economic (theft or fraud). Therefore, there had to be two separate acts of restitution. The first form of restitution—sacrificing a ram—was paid to God to compensate Him for the oath-taker's attempt to thwart God's civil court. This was necessary to satisfy God in His capacity as both High Priest and King of the heavenly court. The second—return of the stolen item, plus a 20% payment—was required by God's law to satisfy the earthly victim in his legal capacity as a victim. Both the victim and the priest served as *covenantal agents of God*: the first civil, the second ecclesiastical.

The penalty for unconfessed theft is double restitution (Ex. 22:4). This is reduced to the restoration of the stolen property plus a 20% penalty if the thief confesses his crime before either its discovery or his conviction, as we shall see. *The 20% penalty payment constituted a double tithe*.[11]

Why impose a 20% penalty, the equivalent of a double tithe? What did the tithe have to do with restitution to the victim? James Jordan suggested that it was because guardianship is associated with Levitical office, and so is the tithe. Numbers 18 established the Levites as the guardians of sacred space and sacred things. "And thy brethren also of the tribe of Levi, the tribe of thy father, bring thou with thee, that they may be joined unto thee, and minister unto thee: but thou and thy sons with thee shall minister before the tabernacle of witness. And they shall keep thy charge, and the charge of all the tabernacle: only they shall not come nigh the vessels of the sanctuary and the altar, that neither they, nor ye also, die" (Num. 18:2–3). They were required to keep the common Israelites away from the sacred spaces of the tabernacle. This entitled them to a tithe as their lawful inheritance.[12] Conclusion: *the tithe and the Levitical protection of sacred space were judicially linked*.

> And, behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tenth in Israel for an inheritance, for their service which they serve, even the service of the tabernacle of the congregation. Neither must the children of Israel henceforth come nigh the tabernacle of the congregation, lest they bear sin, and die. But the Levites shall do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation,

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11. Andrew A. Bonar, *A Commentary on Leviticus* (London: Banner of Truth Trust, [1846] 1966), p. 109.

12. Gary North, *Sanctions and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Numbers*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [1997] 2012), ch. 10.

> and they shall bear their iniquity: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations, that among the children of Israel they have no inheritance. But the tithes of the children of Israel, which they offer as an heave offering unto the LORD, I have given to the Levites to inherit: therefore I have said unto them, Among the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance (Num. 18:21–24).

Death was the civil penalty for invading the temple's sacred space, which was protected by the Levites (Num. 18:7), just as an invasion of the Aaronic priests' sacred space by the Levites would bring God's death sentence (Num. 18:3). The penalty for other invasions of sacred areas was the 20% penalty: a double tithe. A vow to a priest was redeemed by paying a 20% commission (Lev. 27:19). Refusal to pay this redemption price resulted in the permanent loss of the property, even rural land (Lev. 27:20–21).[13] Unintentional boundary violations of sacred things also required a double tithe penalty: "And if a man eat of the holy thing unwittingly, then he shall put the fifth part thereof unto it, and shall give it unto the priest with the holy thing" (Lev. 22:14). "Speak unto the children of Israel, When a man or woman shall commit any sin that men commit, to do a trespass against the LORD, and that person be guilty; Then they shall confess their sin which they have done: and he shall recompense his trespass with the principal thereof, and add unto it the fifth part thereof, and give it unto him against whom he hath trespassed" (Num. 5:6–7).

In the same sense that every man is a priest through Adam, every man is a Levite through Adam. He is a designated guardian of God's property: a Levitical function. The property owner is inescapably God's steward, because God owns everything: "For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills" (Ps. 50:10).[14] All ownership is necessarily representative. It is therefore stewardship. This judicially bounded sphere of economic responsibility is not to be invaded unlawfully: the eighth commandment (Ex. 20:15).[15] Adam is the archetype. He was established as a guardian of God's property—a Levitical function—even before he acted as a priest. He was told to serve as a guardian on the day of his creation (Gen. 2:15). His profane, sacrilegious act of priestly defiance—eating a prohibited communion meal in the presence of an invading serpent—took place later (Gen. 3:6).

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13. Chapter 36.

14. Gary North, *Confidence and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Psalms* (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, 2012), ch. 10.

15. North, *Authority and Dominion*, ch. 28.

D. Thwarting Civil Justice

The lie or false oath had been intended to deflect either the economic victim or the court from discovering the truth. In this sense, it was an affront to God's kingly justice. It was an attack on the integrity of both His heavenly court and His representative earthly civil court. The false testimony may or may not have put someone else under suspicion; we are not told. What we are told is that there were two separate forms of restitution: (1) the return to the victim of the full value of whatever had been stolen, plus a penalty payment of 20% (a double tithe); (2) a ram to be sacrificed by a priest.

The connection between the false oath and the civil court is easy to understand. The court enforces justice in the name of God and on behalf of the victim. It *sets things straight* judicially and economically by declaring guilt or innocence. That is, the civil court practices judicial *orthodoxy*: straight speaking. It defends its own integrity. Why, then, is the court not authorized by God to collect for itself the extra 20%, or allowed to impose some additional penalty? Why does the entire restitution payment appear to go to the victim,[16] since the false oath was made to impede the proper functioning of the court?

1. The Victim Becomes a Judicial Agent

We can find the answer to this question by first observing that the initial lie was made to the neighbor, not to the court: "If a soul sin, and commit a trespass against the LORD, and lie unto his neighbour in that which was delivered him to keep, or in fellowship, or in a thing taken away by violence, or hath deceived his neighbour; . . ." This preliminary section of the passage does not mention any formal court proceeding, yet the criminal still owed a ram to God. This indicates that the victim, to whom the criminal lied, was in fact an agent of the civil court, even though the court had not been called into session. It was the victim who possessed lawful authority to call the court into session. He was gathering preliminary facts regarding the violation. *The victim was acting therefore not only on his own behalf but also as an agent of society's primary institution of civil justice, the court*. The lie to the neighbor was therefore judicially an oath to a covenantal institution. It had a unique binding character that conventional falsehoods do not possess.

The victim, in seeking justice, does not represent only himself.

16. See below: Section I.

Biblical jurisprudence recognizes the earthly victim as a representative of God. A sin against him is always in his legal capacity as God's representative; *the ultimate target of the sin is God*. The sinner in history attacks various aspects of the creation in his attempt to defy God, since God cannot be attacked directly. The sinner violates God-established earthly boundaries in his judicial rebellion against God. The archetype act of rebellion was Adam's. Adam could not attack God directly, for God was absent from the garden; instead, Adam violated the boundary that God had placed around the forbidden tree.

This leads us to a significant conclusion: *the very existence of an earthly victim calls God's heavenly court of justice into session*. If the existence of a boundary violation becomes known to the victim, this discovery automatically invokes an earthly civil court of justice.[17] This invocation may not be a formal public act, but God, as the sovereign king of the commonwealth, calls it into session historically. Whenever the victim learns of the violation, he is supposed to begin a search for incriminating evidence. This is because crimes are not supposed to go unpunished in God's social order, for all crimes are inherently attacks on God. Crimes are to be solved in history whenever the costs of conviction are not prohibitive, i.e., whenever too many resources are not drained from the victim or the court in solving a particular crime.

2. Scarcity and Justice

The world is under a curse: a cursed form of scarcity (Gen. 3:17–19).[18] There are limits to anti-crime budgets. In a world of scarcity, including scarcity of accurate knowledge, there cannot be perfect justice. Justice in history is purchased at a price.[19] The price of perfect justice institutionally is too high; any attempt by a court to achieve it will bankrupt the institution that finances the court. This quest for exhaustive knowledge and perfect justice paralyzes the institutions that pursue them. Therefore, if the victim thinks it will take too many of his own resources to identify and convict the criminal, or if he thinks his accusation could be turned against him later for lack of evidence gathered

17. If someone other than the victim first discovers the violation, he is to inform the victim or the person most likely to be the victim. To fail to do this is judicially to become an accomplice of the criminal.

18. Gary North, *Sovereignty and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Genesis* (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [1982] 2012), ch. 12.

19. The ultimate price of perfect justice was paid by Jesus Christ's act of comprehensive redemption at Calvary. Without this representative payment, God's perfect justice would have demanded the end of the Adamic race at the conclusion of Adam's trial.

by the court, he has the option of refusing to pursue the matter. He can let God settle it in eternity. He can rest confident in God's perfect justice. Rushdoony said it well: "History culminates in Christ's triumph, and eternity settles all scores."[20]

God nevertheless wants criminals brought to justice in history. The Bible places the responsibility of pursuing justice on the individual who is most likely to want to see the criminal brought to justice: the victim.[21] Because the crime was ultimately against God and His mandated social order, the victim becomes God's primary representative agent in pursuing justice. The victim is also uniquely motivated to begin this search for incriminating evidence, since he is the loser, and he will receive a restitution payment upon confession by, or conviction of, the criminal. As I have argued elsewhere, if he refuses to pursue the criminal or bring charges against him, the civil court is not to intrude on the case, unless he is a minor or legally incompetent.[22] Unless the criminal has threatened the victim with reprisals, thereby making the court his victim, the court is to abide by the decision of the victim. Thus, when the victim begins his investigation of the crime, he is serving as God's primary covenantal agent. His task is to gather information to be used in a lawsuit against the criminal. He is acting as an agent of two courts: God's heavenly court and His earthly civil court. In a sense this does not do full justice to the victim's unique legal position. *The civil court is to some degree the economic agent of the victim*. The victim, in his legal capacity as a victim, is a representative of God. The problem is, the court does not know who the victim is, plaintiff or defendant, until after the presentation of the evidence and cross examination.

E. Allocating the Costs of Civil Justice

Court costs and legal fees are very high in modern American society because of its demonic quest for perfect earthly justice.[23] Thus, one legitimate way for society to reduce the number of cases placed before its civil courts is to require the prosecutor—either the plaintiff or the

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20. R. J. Rushdoony, *The Institutes of Biblical Law* (Nutley, New Jersey: Craig Press, 1973), p. 123.

21. In this sense, this singling out of a prosecutor parallels the Mosaic Covenant's authorization of the blood avenger (kinsman-redeemer) to pursue and execute a person suspected of murder of the blood avenger's nearest of kin (Num. 35:19–27).

22. North, *Authority and Dominion*, ch. 33:G.

23. For examples of this growing paralysis in the American legal system, see Macklin Fleming, *The Price of Perfect Justice* (New York: Basic Books, 1974).

prosecuting attorney's office—to pay for all court and legal expenses if the defendant is declared innocent. The risk of a "not guilty" verdict should be borne by the prosecutor: the cost of an unsuccessful prosecution. Today, this risk is entirely born by the defendants in societies, such as the United States, where those declared innocent are not reimbursed for their defense costs. The risk of bearing these costs should be shifted from the defendant to the one bringing the accusation.

It is true that poor people could not afford to prosecute if they had to bear all of the risk of paying for all court costs and legal fees. But there is another side to this problem. It is equally true that poor people cannot afford to defend themselves. This is why, in the United States, the civil government must by law provide poor people with a defense lawyer when the state brings a poor person to trial.[24] The only thing that protects a poor person from a private plaintiff is his poverty: there is nothing to collect. But if the state still enforced slavery for economic offenses by those who have no assets, the poor man would again be a target.[25]

What of the middle-class defendant? He can be destroyed financially by a wealthy plaintiff, such as a large corporation, or by an agency of civil government. This is unjust: bankrupting the innocent person by means of the trial process. The rule of law should provide that neither the plaintiff nor the defendant be given an economic advantage in a civil court. I shall explain the implications of this later in this chapter.

1. Civil Law and Criminal Law

When I say civil court, I mean criminal court. Modern humanist law distinguishes between criminal law and civil law. Civil law cases are formal debates between two private parties that are decided by a court. Somebody owes something to another private individual; the court decides who owes what. Criminal law is between the state and

24. The case was *Gideon v. Wainright* (1963). A movie was made about this case, *Gideon's Trumpet*.

25. The United States Constitution does allow enslavement for criminal convictions: "Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, *except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted*, shall exist within the United States, or any place under their jurisdiction" (Amendment 13 [1865], emphasis added.) Early in the twentieth century, three Supreme Court cases negated state laws authorizing peonage for default on private debts: *Peonage Cases* (1903), *Bailey v. Alabama* (1911), and *United States v. Reynolds* (1953). The Court has never voided peonage for criminal convictions, but local governments never enact such statutes.

an accused person. Criminal law refers to cases tried in a court because of the criminal's transgression of a statute. In modern terminology, the criminal owes a debt to society.

The Bible does not distinguish between civil law and criminal law. All cases are criminal cases, since all are argued in a civil court. (The language here is confusing because of the humanists: the criminal law vs. civil law distinction.) So-called civil cases, when brought before a civil magistrate—the minister of the sword—are brought because one party (the defendant) has defrauded another (the plaintiff) or because one party (the plaintiff) is trying to defraud the other (the defendant). A self-proclaimed victim brings his accusations against someone by means of the state. That another person has refused to pay him what is owed necessarily makes the dispute a criminal case, biblically speaking. Someone is defrauding the other. Someone therefore must be threatened by the sword: civil government. The refusal to pay what is owed is a criminal act, biblically speaking. The serpent's seduction of Adam and Eve was not merely a civil matter between him and them. It was a criminal matter. There are no cases in the Bible of private disputes that go before the king or an Israelite court that do not become criminal matters, i.e., matters decided by the monopoly of violence, the state.

Once a public accusation is made by one party against another, the issue of criminality—false witness—cannot be evaded. Someone may be lying. That person, biblically speaking, is a criminal. *All civil court cases are inescapably criminal cases, biblically speaking*. All call for restitution by a false accuser (Deut. 19:14–19). In such cases, the person who brought the accusation and then loses the case, if he can be shown to have lied, must pay all court costs and make restitution to the victim equal to the value of whatever he sought to extract from him (Deut. 19:19).[26]

If neither party is proven a false witness, then the loser should pay the court costs of the winner, as in the British common law system. This upholds the principle of victim's rights, the fundamental principle of biblical justice. *The innocent party should experience no penalty, including his defense costs*. Once a society acknowledges this principle, it must seek ways to structure its court procedures to see to it that victims are protected. In all modern societies, this would require a major restructuring.

26. Gary North, *Inheritance and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Deuteronomy*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [1999] 2012), ch. 18.

2. Who Is the Accuser?

The plaintiff alone determines whether or not to initiate the prosecution of a lawsuit; the court is to support his decision. The question is: Must the court press charges solely on the testimony of the victim? If the victim is poor, for example, and cannot afford to hire a lawyer, or if he fears the economic consequences of having brought charges that a jury refuses to support, should the court intervene and prosecute on behalf of the victim? In other words, if the court believes that there is sufficient evidence of criminal wrongdoing to warrant a trial, can it lawfully begin proceedings if the victim fears to do so on his own behalf?

The legal issue here is victim's rights. The officers of the state are not sure who is telling the truth. The rights of the victim must be upheld, but who is the victim? Only a trial can determine this. The question is: Should there be a trial? If, as in the British legal system, the one who loses the case pays for all court costs, the victim may be afraid to seek justice in the courts. The victim could be either the accuser or the accused. How can the court see to it that God's justice is maintained if either party is afraid to go to trial even though he believes himself to be the innocent victim?

If the plaintiff agrees to press charges, the court has no decision to make. The officers open the court to the rival parties. The jury decides. The loser pays the winner's legal costs. But there is a limit on what he owes to the winner, as we shall see: whatever he spent for his own defense. If the plaintiff is unwilling to take this risk, but the court decides that prosecution is warranted in the name of justice, should the plaintiff be allowed to transfer the risk of loss to the court? That is, should the court be allowed to act as the agent of the plaintiff, pressing charges on the basis of the evidence, but relieving the plaintiff of all risk of loss if the jury decides otherwise? If so, and the court does press charges, who should pay whom if the accused is declared innocent by the jury? Second, who should be paid if the jury finds the accused guilty?

3. Who Pays?

Let us consider the first case: the plaintiff decides to accept the risk. He decides to press charges. The civil court should not have the option of refusing to prosecute. The trial takes place. The loser pays his own lawyer (if any) and the defendant's lawyer. The state provides the service for free. This is what the state is supposed to do: provide justice for all.

Without limiting what the loser pays, there is a problem: the potential threat of a defendant who tells the plaintiff that he intends to hire a very expensive lawyer. "If I win," the defendant says, "you will be sold into slavery to pay my legal expenses. And with this lawyer, I will probably win. You can't afford to hire anyone equally good." This weighs the scales of justice against the plaintiff. He may be too fearful of bringing legitimate charges. Of course, it could be the reverse: a wealthy plaintiff threatens the defendant with the post-trial cost of paying a high-priced lawyer. *The solution is to require the guilty party to pay the victorious party only as much money as he himself paid his own lawyer*. This way, there is pressure on the two parties to come to an agreement in advance regarding total legal expenses, but neither party can use the threat of post-trial legal expenses to scare the other into a settlement.

In a case between a rich man and a poor man, the poor man would probably argue his own case. That would reduce his legal expenses to zero. This is what takes place in local small claims courts in the United States. He would owe nothing to the defendant if he loses but is not convicted of false witness. But the defendant does not have to bear major legal expenses if the two go before the judge as individuals. If the initiator decides to forego the use of a lawyer, the case can be settled rapidly. This reduces the society's cost of justice. It also reduces income for lawyers, therefor reducing the supply of lawyers.

The second case is more difficult case. The plaintiff believes he is a victim, but he refuses to bear the responsibility of losing. Perhaps he is poor. Should the state be allowed to grant him immunity from post-trial expenses? Yes. Justice should not be available only to individuals who can afford to lose. The state can afford to lose. Nevertheless, the state may choose not to prosecute if it thinks the plaintiff's case is weak. If the legal system provides an option that the accused automatically has all of his defense expenses paid by the court, then the civil court's officers may lawfully refuse to press charges if they believe that the plaintiff is likely to lose and the plaintiff is unwilling to bear the risk of loss. Like the United States Supreme Court, which is not compelled by law to review every case sent to it by lower courts, so is the local court. It can refuse to prosecute.

If the court grants immunity to the plaintiff for court expenses, it must do the same for the accused. The court must not tip the burden of loss in favor of either party. If the court decides to prosecute, and the defendant loses, the defendant is required to pay the victim, but

he is not required to pay the court. The state provides its services to the disputants for free. Taxes pay for the court.

In a biblical civil order, the state acts as the agent of a victim. It cannot be sure in advance who the victim is. I have argued in *Tools of Dominion* and *Victim's Rights* that the state may not prosecute anyone in its own name unless a state agency has been defrauded or unless the injured party is incompetent: a child, a moron, or some other person with no one to speak on his behalf. The most important of these silent victims is a murder victim. The state is God's agent of vengeance by way of a victim, although the state can sometimes be the victim.[27]

I argue here that the state is also authorized to act as the plaintiff's agent when the plaintiff seeks post-trial economic immunity. In seeking such immunity, the plaintiff transfers the decision to prosecute to the court. In modern American society, a grand jury serves as the decision-maker. So does a district attorney. There is no question that fewer cases would be brought before grand juries by district attorneys if the district attorney's office had to bear the costs of both the defense and the prosecution.

If the plaintiff, having received post-trial immunity, is subsequently convicted of being a false witness, does he owe the state anything? Not if justice is to be provided by the state for free, which the Bible says it should. He owes his victim whatever the victim would have owed him, had the victim been convicted (Deut. 19:14–19). He does not owe the court anything beyond the sacrifice required in Leviticus 6:1–7.

4. The State Should Pay Basic Legal Fees

In order to protect the innocent accused person, the state should pay all court costs when it prosecutes. The modern United States court does this in the case of poor defendants only. This discriminates against the non-poor defendant. Even the poor are cheated: they must pick from court-appointed attorneys who are not paid very much. The defendant is not provided with funds equal to the funds made available to the prosecution. *The state should offer a defendant the same amount of money that the state's prosecuting attorney pays to prosecute the case*. The state's prosecuting attorney would then have to estimate the total costs of prosecution in advance and pay himself and his staff

27. North, *Authority and Dominion*, ch. 33:G; North, *Victim's Rights: The Biblical View of Civil Justice* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1990), pp. 35–41.

no more than his half. In effect, he would be required to contract with the court for services rendered.

In such a system of justice, there would be no independent salaries or free rental space for the prosecutor and his staff. This way, the court can estimate in advance what it will cost to prosecute a case. Far more important, so can the defendant. A case's prosecution costs are not hidden in a collective annual budget for the prosecutor's office. The defendant would receive the same amount of money to hire his defense. This would mean that a defendant would have to accept this amount as his limit, too, unless he were willing to forego reimbursement by the state for expenses above this amount if he should win. In a sense, this is a recommendation for state-funded defense payments: each side receives from the local court a minimum amount of money to conduct its case before the court. The defendant can pay more if he wants to, but the state would not reimburse him.

This system would place limits on the state's risk of losing a case. It would also place limits on the state's economic ability to prosecute a case. A prosecutor would hesitate before launching a case. There would be no financially open-ended cases. Prosecutors could not afford to pursue perfect justice. They would have to count the costs (Luke 14:28–30).[28]

5. Spending Caps

Without a pre-paid system with mutual spending caps and also with state liability to pay all of the innocent defendant's legal expenses (victim's rights), a wealthy defendant could hire a very expensive law firm, and the state would have pay all of his fees if the accused is declared innocent. The state might not be willing to prosecute: too much risk—the more expensive the defense team, the more the state's risk. *But biblical civil justice demands that both the plaintiff and the accused should "have his day in court" irrespective of their personal wealth*. Men should not be allowed to buy their way out of court, since they will not be allowed to buy their way out of God's court on judgment day.[29] This is why a pre-paid legal expenses system is needed with a spending cap on both the prosecution's total expenses and the defense's reimbursable legal expenses. The prosecution decides how much it is willing to spend to achieve justice, but not irrespective of

28. Gary North, *Treasure and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Luke*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2000] 2012), ch. 34.

29. They should be allowed to buy the best defense lawyer they can afford after a trial has begun. They should not be given the ability to buy their way out, pre-trial.

the defense's expenses. It provides the same amount of money to the defendant for paying his lawyer. The case would be more likely to be decided in terms of its merits rather than the comparative economic resources available to attorneys.

This system would retard the demonic, bankrupting quest for perfect justice. A prosecuting attorney whose cases repeatedly result in major losses for the court would find himself in trouble at the next election. There would be negative political sanctions for high expenses because of negative economic sanctions.

This payments system does not subsidize the prosecution. In this sense, it acts as an economic restraint on the state. The state must prove its cases, not gain men's consent through imposing the threat of bankruptcy on innocent people who may be able to win in court. The growth of the messianic state in the twentieth century was heavily subsidized by the courts' payments system. The growth of administrative law, which legal historian Harold Berman regarded as the greatest single threat to human freedom,[30] was funded by the present payments system.

6. Intercession as a Model

Is there biblical evidence for state-funding of lawyers on both sides? Direct evidence, no; indirect evidence, yes: the biblical doctrine of intercession. *Intercession is always* ***judicial*** *in Scripture*, though not always exclusively judicial. It is formal pleading before the throne of God. God prophesied of the coming Messiah: "Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors" (Isa. 53:12). Because God knew that Judah was guilty, Jeremiah was warned: "Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to me: for I will not hear thee" (Jer. 7:16).

In the New Testament, God the Father has established a model for justice: providing His people with a free defense attorney, the Holy Spirit. "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, be-

30. Harold J. Berman, *Law and Revolution: The Formation of the Western Legal Tradition* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1983), Introduction.

cause he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God" (Rom. 8:26–27). The Holy Spirit acts in the name of Jesus, who serves as the supreme defense attorney. "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us" (Rom. 8:34). "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7:25). *Jesus Christ has paid the legal defense costs for His people*.

God does not provide an attorney for the guilty. But because God is omniscient, there is no function for a defense lawyer on judgment day,[31] just as there was no need for defense counsel for Judah in Jeremiah's day. However, because men are not God, they are not omniscient. Men do not know in advance who is innocent or guilty. Thus, the state, as the earthly representative of God's heavenly court, should provide every defendant it prosecutes with money to hire a defense lawyer whenever it provides state-financed prosecuting attorneys.

F. Priestly Agents of God's Heavenly Court

When the plaintiff brings a lawsuit in his own name, he inevitably also brings it in God's name, for God is the primary victim of crime. If he was a victim, he is acting as God's agent. The civil court is required to examine the evidence and announce judgment, but this judgment is made in the name of the two victims: God and the earthly victim, either the plaintiff or the defendant. The civil court is an agent of the victim in a way that the ecclesiastical court is not. The civil court acts to defend the victim's rights, whereas the priest acts to defend the civil court's authority in the case of a false oath.

The required animal sacrifice served as an atonement for a crime against God's civil court. This sacrifice wiped away the sin ritually. It was a public acknowledgment of a transgression against God's civil court. What is significant here is that *an ecclesiastical act was required to atone for a civil transgression*. The verbal cover-up (false witness) required a ritual payment.

This raises a key question: Why was there a ritual connection between a civil court and the priesthood? Because of the two-fold character of God's judgment. The civil court always represents God's heavenly court in a subordinate fashion, analogous to the victim, who

31. Seen on a Tee-shirt: "There will be no plea-bargaining on Judgment Day."

in his legal capacity as a victim also represents God subordinately. The *civil court* acts on behalf of the victim, but only in its judicial capacity as the *minister of kingly justice* (Rom. 13:4), as the institution that lawfully bears the monopolistic sword of vengeance.[32] But God requires more than civil sanctions to placate His wrath against the criminal. He sits on His throne as both High Priest and King; on earth, these offices are divided except in two unique cases: Melchizedek (Gen. 14:18) and Jesus Christ. *God must be placated in both of His offices*. This is why no single earthly court can lawfully offer two-fold atonement to a criminal. God therefore requires a priestly sacrifice.

1. New Testament Sacrifice

In the New Testament, this priestly sacrifice was made by Jesus Christ at Calvary. The various animal sacrifices in the Old Testament representationally prefigured this ultimate sacrifice (Heb. 9). A question legitimately can be raised: Is any post-Calvary public mark of contrition lawfully imposed by the church on the perjurer? If so, on what legal basis?

If the perjurer is a church member, he has partaken of the Lord's Supper throughout the period following his false testimony to the court. This placed him in jeopardy of God's negative sanctions (I Cor. 11:30). He ignored this threat, thereby implicitly adopting the same false theology of God's minimal sanctions, previously described. The church's officers deserve to know of the transgression, and can lawfully assign a penalty. This penalty should not exceed the value of a ram in the Mosaic economy.

If the perjurer is not a church member, he is still dependent on continuing judgments by the church to preserve God's common grace in history. The state can lawfully function in non-Christian environments, but only because of the common grace of God, which is mediated through His church and its sacraments. Offering these representative sacrifices is the permanent responsibility of God's church. This is why Israel had to offer 70 bullocks annually (Num. 29:12–32) as sacrifices for the symbolic 70 pagan nations of the world (Jud. 1:7), plus a single bullock for herself on the eighth day (Num. 29:36).[33]

32. Gary North, *Cooperation and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Romans*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2000] 2012), ch. 11.

33. When Israel fell in A.D. 70, she had become like all the other pagan nations. She could no longer offer efficacious sacrifices for them or for herself. From that point on, only the sacrifice of Jesus Christ at Calvary could serve as any nation's atonement—covering or ransom—before God.

2. The Church: Guardian of the Civil Oath

What this means is that the church is the guardian of the covenantal civil oath. This is an inescapable conclusion from the fact that *only the church has the authority to accept the perjurer's sacrifice in atonement for the false oath*. The state cannot offer this release from guilt. The oath involves the formal calling down of God's negative covenant sanctions on the oath-taker. *He who uses God's name in vain in a formal judicial conflict must then seek judicial cleansing from the church*. The reason why the oath is guarded by the church is that the church alone can lawfully invoke the eternal negative sanctions of God against an individual (Matt. 18:18). *Thus, by invoking the oath in a civil court, the criminal necessarily brings himself under the judicial authority of the church*.

The modern practice of allowing atheists to "affirm" to tell the truth in court, but not to swear on the Bible or in God's name, is a direct affront against God and against the church as the guardian of the oath. It is also inevitably *an act of divinizing the state by default*. The state becomes the sole enforcer of the public affirmation. In such a worldview, there is no appeal in history beyond the state and its sanctions. *The atheist's affirmation is therefore a judicial act demanding the removal of God from the courtroom*. Thus, it requires the creation of a new oath system, with the state as the sole guardian of the oath. The state acts not in God's name but in its own. Rushdoony's comments are on target: "If a witness is asked to swear to tell the whole truth and nothing but the truth without any reference to God, truth then can be and is commonly redefined in terms of himself. The oath in God's name is the 'legal recognition of God'[34] as the source of all things and the only true ground of all being. It establishes the state under God and under His law. The removal of God from oaths, and the light and dishonest use of oaths, is a declaration of independence from Him, and it is warfare against God in the name of the new gods, apostate man and his totalitarian state."[35]

The biblical state can lawfully impose negative sanctions against a perjurer, but only on behalf of the victim. The state cannot lawfully pronounce the permanent negative sanctions of the oath against anyone. *The state lawfully requires an oath, but it is not the institutional enforcer of this oath*. The presence of the *oath to God* is a public acknowledg-

34. T. Robert Ingram, *The World Under God's Law* (Houston, Texas: St. Thomas Press, 1962), p. 46.

35. Rushdoony, *Institutes of Biblical Law*, p. 115.

ment of the *non-autonomy of the state*. God is above the state, and the church stands next to it as the guardian of the oath.[36]

This means that theocracy is required by God's civil law. Without the God-given authority to require an oath, the state would lose its covenantal status as a lawful monopolistic institution with the authority to enforce physical sanctions against evil-doers. It would lose its status as a covenantal institution. Yet by imposing an oath, the state inescapably places itself under the protection of the church, for the church is the defender of the oath. As the great seventeenth-century jurist Sir Edward Coke put it, "protection draws allegiance, and allegiance draws protection."[37]

A lawful covenantal oath is always *self-maledictory*: it calls down God's negative sanctions on the oath-taker if he lies. This includes *eternal negative sanctions*. The state acts only on behalf of victims: God's primary representatives in criminal cases. It cannot act on its own behalf in a priestly capacity in God's heavenly court. The state cannot lawfully act as an autonomous priestly intermediary between God and man. To argue that the state imposes the oath as a lawful agency under God but apart from the church is *to anoint the state as a priestly intermediary between God and man*, an institution possessing the power to declare God's negative eternal sanctions. *Such an assertion by a state identifies the state as messianic*.

The church alone is empowered by God to act as the guardian of the civil oath. The presence of a required payment to the priest is proof of this conclusion. Those political pluralists who today call for an absolute separation between church and state are implicitly calling for the elevation of the state into the office of lawful priestly mediator between man and God, or else they are denying God and His sanctions altogether, thereby deifying the state by default. In either case, they are abandoning biblical covenant theology. Political pluralism inescapably defends the establishment of a messianic state, but in the name of disestablishment: the separation of church and state.[38]

36. The state, in turn, is responsible for the preservation of the legal environment that protects the church. The church is not institutionally autonomous, either.

37. Cited by Rebecca West, *The New Meaning of Treason* (New York: Viking Press, 1964), p. 12; in Rushdoony, *Institutes*, p. 118.

38. Gary North, *Political Polytheism: The Myth of Pluralism* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1989).

G. Confession and Restitution[39]

Once a person commits a theft, he automatically owes the victim at least a 20% payment in addition to the return of the stolen item or its present monetary equivalent. The case does not have to come to trial for this penalty payment to be owed by the thief. I derive this conclusion from the Exodus 22's case laws regarding theft, but also from the example of the archetypal theft: Adam and Eve's stealing of God's forbidden fruit. The moment they touched it, they were guilty. They owed God at least a ritual apology. In the Mosaic Covenant, anyone who touched a forbidden (unclean) thing was himself unclean until evening (Lev. 11:24–25). I think this is because God had originally returned in judgment to the garden "in the cool of the day" (Gen. 3:8), meaning at evening. It did not reduce God's net asset value for them to have merely touched the fruit, but it was a violation of His law, His ethical boundary.

They went beyond mere touching; they stole the fruit and ate it. This was theft. It was corrupt caretaking. It was also the equivalent of eating a forbidden sacrifice, for it was a ritual meal eaten in the presence of the serpent. The penalty for this in ancient Israel was separation from God's people: "But the soul that eateth of the flesh of the sacrifice of peace offerings, that pertain unto the Lord, having his uncleanness upon him, even that soul shall be cut off from his people. Moreover the soul that shall touch any unclean thing, as the uncleanness of man, or any unclean beast, or any abominable unclean thing, and eat of the flesh of the sacrifice of peace offerings, which pertain unto the Lord, even that soul shall be cut off from his people" (Lev. 7:20–21). This penalty pointed back to the garden, where God separated Adam and Eve from Himself by casting them out of the garden.

God, however, is merciful to sinners. Why else would He have created the sacrificial system? Thus, had Adam and Eve come to God as He entered the garden, admitting their sin and pleading for mercy, He would have spared mankind the ultimate penalty of eternal separation from Him. In fact, had they prayed a prayer of confession rather than spending their time sewing fig leaves for themselves, they would have escaped the death penalty—full restitution payment to

39. This section, with minor modifications, is an extract from *Authority and Dominion*, ch. 45:E. I reprint it because not all readers will have access to *Tools*. Also, the problem of determining the proper application of the 20% penalty is so complex that I decided that a footnote to *Tools* would be insufficient. The exegesis of this passage was the most difficult single exegetical task I encountered in *Tools of Dominion*.

God. This very act would have constituted a pre-trial confession of guilt. It would have been an act of symbolic communion with God—a judicial, sanctions-governed act of repentance. But instead, they tried to cover the visible effects of their guilt through their own efforts: sewing fig leaves. God therefore announced His sentence of death against them: dust to dust. Those who wait until the end of the trial must make full (multiple) restitution.

My conclusion is that a pre-trial confession of guilt by the criminal is punished less rigorously than a crime in which the criminal is convicted on the basis of the judge's inquiry. A person is always encouraged by God to confess his sins. If these sins are public sins, then his confession must also be public, if not to a court, then at least to the victim. For example, if a worker steals cash from his employer, but later replaces it before the theft is discovered, he still must confess his crime to the owner. The fact that no human being detected the crime does not affect the question of guilt and sanctions in God's eyes. The thief did impose the *risk* of permanent loss on the victim, even though the victim suffered no known loss; the victim therefore deserves compensation. This upholds the biblical principle of victim's rights. The victim, like God, should strive to be merciful, but biblical law teaches that he is entitled to be informed that mercy is now in order.

H. A Subsidy for Early Confession

The Bible subsidizes early public confession. If a man confesses, he can escape the multiple restitution requirement: he is required only to repay the stolen principal, plus 20%, as this passage teaches.

There appears to be an inconsistency in the law at this point. The penalty for theft is here stated to be 20%, yet in other verses, restitution for theft in general is two-fold, and sometimes four-fold or five-fold (Ex. 22:1–4). Why the apparent discrepancy? We know that Leviticus 6 is dealing with cases in which the guilty person has sworn falsely to the victim or to the authorities. Later, however, he voluntarily confesses the crime and his false oath. I conclude that *the double restitution penalty is imposed only in cases where a formal trial has begun*. The provision in Leviticus 6 of a reduced penalty is an economic incentive for a guilty person to confess his crime before the trial has begun, or at least before the court hands down its decision.[40]

40. I believe the confession had to come prior to testimony from any witness or the presentation of physical evidence. In American jurisprudence, testimony of the suspected criminal before a grand jury, which has the authority to indict a person, is

The thief has testified falsely to the authorities, either before the trial or during it. This is why he owes a trespass offering to the priest (Lev. 5:1–13; 6:6). I argue here that he can lawfully escape the obligation to pay double restitution if he confesses after his initial denial but before the trial begins. He cannot lawfully escape paying double restitution and making the trespass offering if he swears falsely during the trial. He has to confess before the oath is imposed and the trial begins. At the very least, he must confess before it ends.[41]

As always, we should search for a theocentric principle lying behind the law. There is one in this case: the correlation between this *reduced criminal penalty* for voluntary, public confession of sin, when accompanied by economic restitution, and God's offer of a *reduced (eliminated) eternal penalty* for people who make public Christian confession of sin prior to their physical death, if this confession is also accompanied by economic or other kinds of restitution.[42] If we wait for God's formal trial at the throne of judgment, we are assured of being forced to pay a far higher restitution penalty.

Why do I believe that Leviticus 6 refers to a pre-trial voluntary confession? Because of the context of Leviticus 6. Leviticus 5 deals with sins against God that must be voluntarily confessed: "And it shall be, when he shall be guilty in one of these things, that he shall confess that he hath sinned in that thing" (Lev. 5:5). The sinner in Israel then brought a trespass offering to the priest (Lev. 5:8). This

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the judicial equivalent of the Old Testament court's preliminary inquiry. Once the trial begins, it is too late to escape double restitution. This reflects the principles of God's court of permanent justice: once the accused is standing before the throne of judgment, there is no possibility of escaping the maximum sentence. The counter-argument is that prior to the decision of the jury, the confession would reduce the costs of the trial and reduce the risk of handing down a "not guilty" decision to a criminal.

41. Achan confessed to his theft of the forbidden items after the trial had begun, and he was then executed (Josh. 7:20). However, this case may not be a relevant example; he confessed only after Israel had suffered a military defeat, with the loss of 36 men (Josh. 7:5). His trespass required life for life at that point, confession or no confession. Thus, I do not appeal to this test case to defend my thesis. Still, I could be wrong about this. It may be that even after the trial begins and the oath is imposed, but prior to the decision of the jury or the judges, he has an opportunity to repent. But once the court hands down its verdict, he is trapped.

42. I am not arguing that salvation is by works. It is by grace (Eph. 2:8–9). But let us not forget Ephesians 2:10: "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." I am arguing that without obedience, our faith is dead. James 2:18 says: "Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works." And in James 2:20, we read: "But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?" The outward obedience of the criminal is supposed to be demonstrated by his willingness to make restitution to his victim.

made atonement for the trespass: "And he shall offer the second for a burnt offering, according to the manner: and the priest shall make an atonement for him for his sin which he hath sinned, and it shall be forgiven him" (Lev. 5:10). Why would he make such a public confession? Because of his fear of the ultimate penalty that God will impose on those who offer false testimony in His courts.

We then note that Leviticus 6 also deals with trespasses against God. It is specifically stated in Leviticus 6:2 that the 20% penalty payment applies to "a trespass against the Lord" in which the sinning individual has lied to his neighbor about anything that was delivered to him by the neighbor for safekeeping. The context indicates that the sinner has voluntarily confessed his crime against God and his neighbor, just as he voluntarily confessed his trespass against God in Leviticus 5.

I. Restitution Plus a Trespass Offering

Here is the problem the commentator faces. The text in Exodus 22 states that the court is to require double restitution from the neighbor who has "put his hands to" his neighbor's goods. He is therefore to be treated as a common thief. But if double restitution is the required penalty, then what is the 20% penalty of Leviticus 6:5 all about?

1. A Rabbinical Court?

It has been argued by some Jewish commentators that the 20% penalty in Leviticus 6:5 is to be imposed only in cases where there has been a public oath before a rabbinical court. They argue that the penalty payment does not apply to cases of voluntarily confessed theft as such, meaning secret or even undetected thefts, but only to cases of forcible robbery in which the thief is identified, arrested, and brought before an *ecclesiastical* (i.e., synagogue) court, where he gives a false oath of denial, and later admits this lie. Jacob Milgrom wrote: "Since the point of this law is to list only those cases that culminate in the possessor's false oath, it would therefore be pointless to include the term 'theft' which assumes that the possessor-thief is unknown."[43] He goes so far as to argue that the Leviticus passage deals only with religious law, not civil law. "All that matters to the priestly legislator is to enumerate those situations whereby the defrauding of man leads, by a false oath, to the 'defrauding' of God. The general category of theft

43. Jacob Milgrom, *Cult and Conscience: The "Asham" and the Priestly Doctrine of Repentance* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1976), p. 100.

in which the thief remains unidentifiable is therefore irrelevant to his purpose."[44] Eight centuries earlier, Maimonides wrote that the thief who confesses of his own accord owes only the value of the asset he stole, not double restitution. He did not mention the 20% penalty.[45]

If Milgrom's view were correct, this would mean that there would be no court-imposed restitution penalty payment from criminals to victims in (oathless) cases of pre-trial, self-confessed theft. Why would there not be such compensation? Because the one-fifth penalty is assumed by Milgrom to be applicable only in cases where there has been a false oath to a rabbinical court. This interpretation therefore eliminates the 20% penalty payment for pre-trial, self-confessed crimes.

2. Victim's Rights

While this judicial implication follows the premise, it is not in accord with the biblical principle of victim's rights. The victim has been deprived of his property, and he has suffered a sense of loss, assuming that he had actually discovered that the stolen item was missing, yet the Bible supposedly makes no provision to compensate him for these obvious burdens. On the face of it, this conclusion seems highly unlikely, yet it follows inevitably from the initial claim that the 20% penalty only applies to cases where there has been a false oath to an ecclesiastical court.

Why do I believe that this rabbinical court interpretation is unlikely? Because the Bible is emphatic that *victims are to be protected*, and that *criminals are to suffer losses in proportion to their crimes*. The thief who confesses before a trial is not on a par judicially with a neighbor who has, through negligence, lost or inadvertently ruined an item placed in his safekeeping. The negligent neighbor pays only for what he lost; the self-confessed thief has to pay more. The principle of *lex talionis* applies here as elsewhere: the penalty must fit the crime.[46] To argue that the penalty is the same for theft and negligence—the return of the stolen item or its equivalent value—is to deny *lex talionis*.

If thieves were granted the legal option of returning stolen goods whenever it appeared to them that they might be discovered, but before they are put under formal oath, then it would be far less risky

44. *Ibid*., pp. 100–1.

45. Moses Maimonides, *The Book of Torts*, vol. 11 of *The Code of Maimonides*, 14 vols. (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, [1180] 1954), "Laws Concerning Theft," II:I:5, pp. 60–61.

46. North, *Authority and Dominion*, ch. 37.

to steal. If there is a 20% penalty only after a false oath is given but before a trial, then a theft that is confessed before the oath is administered would become virtually risk-free for the thief. He could escape any penalty simply by confessing his crime and by returning the stolen property. The option of self-confession would remain as an escape device whenever the authorities began to close in. If God's law did not impose penalties on theft, it would implicitly be subsidizing criminal behavior. God does not subsidize rebellion.

The express language of the passage militates against Milgrom's interpretation of Leviticus 6. After listing all sorts of theft and deception, the text says, "he shall even restore it in the principal, and shall add the fifth part more thereto" (v. 5). To whom must this penalty payment be paid? To the victim: "Or all that about which he hath *sworn falsely*; he shall even restore it in the principal, and shall add the fifth part more thereto, and *give it unto him to whom it appertaineth*, in the day of his trespass offering" (v. 5; emphasis added).

At this point, I depart slightly from the original text in *Tools of Dominion*.[47] When I wrote that book, I had not yet perceived that the thief's violation of another person's property is judicially analogous to a trespass of a holy place or thing, thereby mandating the economic equivalent of a double tithe. The tithe was paid to a Levite. Thus, the trespass made the stolen property judicially holy, and thereby made its owner, a guardian of God's property, the economic equivalent of a Levite.

I had originally linked the 20% payment penalty to the false oath. The problem with this interpretation is that it disregards the biblical reward for confession prior to a trial. If a false oath automatically invokes the penalty, then what would be the penalty for the crime if the thief voluntarily confesses before lying to the owner? Nothing besides the return of the object stolen? This would subsidize theft. God does not subsidize theft. But if double restitution were automatically imposed, then where would be the economic subsidy for a voluntary pre-trial confession? Thus, the 20% penalty must be the minimal restitution payment for theft, not a payment for the false oath. The payment goes to the victim as a Levitical guardian agent.

Each of the victims of these crimes is to be compensated by a 20% penalty payment. The crimes are separate acts; thus, translators used the English word "or" in listing them, indicating that any one of these criminal infractions automatically invokes the 20% penalty. But what

47. *Idem.*

of the false oath? Consider the context of this passage: the five major sacrifices. The false oath is covenantal and therefore self-maledictory. It invokes its own independent penalty payment: the trespass offering, a ram without blemish (Lev. 6:6). So, the criminal must pay the victim 20% even if he confesses before he is convicted, with or without the presence of a false oath. This law's *economic penalty* applies only to a specific time frame: *pre-trial confession*. The false oath to the court adds an additional requirement: a sacrifice administered by a priest. In the New Covenant, the thief owes payment to a church. The payment is equal in value to a blemish-free ram.

J. Calculating the Required Restitution

Leviticus 6 is not in opposition to Exodus 22:9. Exodus 22:9 requires double restitution either from the false accuser who perjured himself (Deut. 19:16–19) or from the criminal neighbor (thief).

1. Payment to the Victim

Assume that the criminal neighbor swears falsely before the judges in order to avoid having to pay double restitution to his victim; if successful in his deception, he then collects double restitution from the victim.

> If a man shall deliver unto his neighbour money or stuff to keep, and it be stolen out of the man's house; if the thief be found, let him pay double. If the thief be not found, then the master of the house shall be brought unto the judges, to see whether he have put his hand unto his neighbour's goods. For all manner of trespass, whether it be for ox, for ass, for sheep, for raiment, or for any manner of lost thing, which another challengeth to be his, the cause of both parties shall come before the judges; and whom the judges shall condemn, he shall pay double unto his neighbour (Ex. 22:7–9).[48]

What if he then repents of his false oath before it is discovered? He still owes the original double restitution, plus the return of the falsely collected double penalty, plus a 20% penalty payment on everything. Thus, if the stolen object is worth one ounce of gold, the restitution payment owed to the victim by a now-confessed perjured thief would be 4.8 ounces of gold: 2 ounces (the original double restitution payment),[49] plus 2 ounces (the falsely extracted penalty) plus .2 times 4 ounces, meaning .8 ounces = 4.8 ounces.

48. North, *Authority and Dominion*, ch. 45.

49. This assumes that the criminal cannot return the original item to the victim.

What about the perjured thief who refuses to admit his guilt and who is later convicted of this perjury? Because he had been paid double restitution by his victim, he now owes him *six-fold restitution*: double whatever he had stolen (2 × 1) plus double whatever he had unlawfully collected (2 × 2). This threat of six-fold restitution serves as an economic incentive for the perjured thief to confess to the court that he had offered false testimony earlier. We see once again that *biblical law rewards timely confession*.

Exodus 22:9 establishes double restitution for stolen sheep and oxen, not four-fold or five-fold.[50] This is because the stolen animals had not been slaughtered or sold. What if the court does not have proof that the accuser testified falsely against his neighbor, yet also does not have sufficient proof to convict the neighbor? The thieving neighbor escapes paying two-fold restitution. What if he then repents and confesses? He owes his neighbor a 2.4 restitution penalty (2 × 1, plus 2 × .2). What if his crime is discovered later? He owes four-fold restitution for perjury: double what he would have owed if he had been convicted originally.

2. Payment to the Temple

What would he have owed to the temple in the case of unconfessed perjury? If the trespass offering was one animal if he had confessed after having made a false oath or oaths, presumably the penalty was double this.[51] This follows from my thesis that *there is an escalation of penalties*. At each step of the legal proceedings, he can confess and bear a reduced penalty. For each level of deception, there are increased sanctions. God is honored by the very act of self-confession, when such confession has a penalty attached to it. Oath or no oath, the two primary goals of laws governing theft are the *protection of property* (boundary rights) and the *compensation to the victim* (victim's rights). Earthly civil courts are to safeguard the property rights of the victims, making sure that the appropriate penalty is extracted from the criminal and transferred to the victim. There is no requirement of an additional money penalty payment to the civil court because of a false oath regarding theft. A trespass or guilt offering must be paid to the church.

The false oath before God invokes the threat of the ultimate penalty: the eternal wrath of God, preceded by the physical death of the

50. North, *Authority and Dominion*, ch. 45.

51. It could be argued that the penalty was death: a high-handed false oath that was not confessed.

criminal. Unless a person confesses his false oath in this life, makes appropriate restitution to his victim, and brings a transgression offering, God will collect His own restitution payment, and it is far greater than 20%. Ananias and Sapphira lied to church authorities concerning the percentage of their economic gains that they had voluntarily donated to the church. When asked individually by Peter if what they had told the authorities was true, they lied, and God struck each of them dead on the spot, one by one (Acts 5:1–10).[52] This served as a very effective warning to the church in general (v. 11). Presumably, they could have confessed their crime at that point, paying all the money from the sale into the church's treasury, since God was the intended victim of their lies (Acts 5:4). They chose instead to lie. So, God imposed His more rigorous penalty.

K. After the Accusation, but Before the Trial

What if the thief stole an animal, especially a sheep or an ox, and then sold it? If the civil authorities have brought the thief to trial, but the trial has not been held, would he be given the opportunity to confess to the victim, and then go to the buyer, confess his crime, buy it back at the purchase price plus 20%, and return it to the true owner, plus 20%? This would seem to be a reasonable conclusion. His confession would reduce the cost of prosecuting him and convicting him. Understand, however, that the thief has committed two crimes: the original theft and the defrauding of the buyer. The buyer was led to believe that the thief possessed the legal right of ownership, which was being passed to the new buyer.[53] Thus, the defrauded buyer is also entitled to a 20% penalty payment, as well as the return of his purchase price. This would make the total penalty 40%, since he had defrauded two people: the first by means of the theft and the second by means of his lie.

The thief's confession reduces the possibility that a guilty man will go free and his innocent victim will remain defrauded. Apart from his admission, the judges might make a mistake, especially if the thief commits perjury during the trial. His confession eliminates this judicial problem.

The modern judicial system has adopted an analogous solution: plea bargaining. A criminal confesses falsely to having committed a lesser crime, and the judge accepts this admission and hands down a

52. Gary North, *Sacrifice and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Acts*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2000] 2012), ch. 4.

53. North, *Authority and Dominion*, ch. 43:C:3.

reduced penalty. This is the way that prosecuting attorneys unclog the court system. The Bible rejects this approach. Plea bargaining leaves the main crime officially unsolved, and it allows the guilty person to appear less of a threat to society than his behavior indicates that he is. The Bible does recognize the institutional problem, however: the risks and costs of gaining a conviction. Instead of having the criminal plead guilty to a lesser crime, it encourages him to plead guilty to the actual crime before the trial, and thereby receive a reduced penalty.

L. Civil Identification of a True Church

The question arises: To which church does he owe the payment? I suggest the following. If he belongs to a local church, he owes the payment to that congregation, for he has disgraced it. If he does not belong to a church but the victim does, then he pays the penalty payment to the victim's church: the congregation of God's prosecuting agent. If neither of them belongs to a church, then it would be sensible to allocate the money to the congregation nearest geographically to the residence of the criminal, for he is living inside that church's jurisdiction: the regional boundary in which its prayers are regularly offered.

There is an unbreakable legal relationship between this law and civil theocracy. This law mandates a trespass offering, which means that the law mandates that the civil government enforce an economic payment to a local congregation: either the criminal's, the victim's, or the one closest to where the crime was committed. This raises an inescapable legal question: *What is a true church*? Answer: one that confesses the Trinity. This law therefore mandates some form of Trinitarian oath-bound civil order, with confessional churches serving as the guardians of the civil oath: the oath required by the civil government in a trial. To put it in terms of traditional United States court practice, when a person swears on a Bible in a court of law, there must be a guardian of this oath. The courtroom Bible is not limited to the Old Testament. Because this law was not annulled by Christ's resurrection, it indicates that the church, not the state, is the lawful guardian of the civil oath, and therefore is entitled to a trespass offering when this oath is violated. The payment goes to a church, not to the civil government.

This law requires that the local civil government identify the local ecclesiastical guardians of the oath. It must identify those congregations that are confessionally orthodox and therefore eligible to receive the trespass offering. This authority to identify confessionally orthodox churches implies that members of associations not so

identified as orthodox cannot legally be granted the legal status of citizens. In short, the state is a confessional, oath-bound, covenantal institution. It is required to establish what constitutes a valid civil oath, but only after consultation with churches. Churches are confessional, covenantal institutions, separate from the state. They may lawfully impose added confessional requirements beyond the civil oath for their members and officers, but if they do not confess the Trinity, they are not to be recognized as guardians of the civil oath.

1. Religious Pluralists Object

To escape the Bible's requirement of a civil theocracy—a confessional civil government—Christian political pluralists must deny the New Covenant validity of this law. They must also give up the idea that there is a guardian of the oath other than the state. They must deny that the church has the authority lawfully to call down God's negative sanctions against those civil orders that refuse to repent by refusing to re-constitute themselves judicially under a Trinitarian oath. But they fail to specify by what New Testament legal principle this Levitical law has been annulled.

If the state identifies which churches are orthodox, doesn't this make the state the ultimate guardian of the oath? No; God has identified His church as the guardian—the agency that alone has a lawful claim on the trespass offering. Any state that identifies a guardian other than Trinitarian churches within its jurisdiction will come under God's historical sanctions. Nevertheless, the state is not under the church. It is a legally separate jurisdiction. The Bible does not teach ecclesiocracy: the civil empowerment of the church. The state is bound by its own Trinitarian oath.

If God did not impose His sanctions in history, then either the church or the state would eventually exercise final sovereignty in history, imposing its confession on rival institutions. Because the state possesses greater temporal power than the church does, assuming the absence of God's sanctions in history, this denial of God's sanctions in history necessarily leads to the establishment of a rival theocratic order: Islamic theocracy, Israeli theocracy, tribal theocracy, Shinto theocracy, humanist theocracy (Communism,[54] Nazism,[55] political

54. Gary North, *Marx's Religion of Revolution: Regeneration Through Chaos* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, [1968] 1989); F. N. Lee, *Communist Eschatology* (Nutley, New Jersey: Craig Press, 1974).

55. Let us remember that the phrase "Heil Hitler" is literally translated "Salvation Hitler." See Thomas Schirrmacher, "National Socialism as Religion," *Chalcedon Report*

pluralism[56]), or whatever. *The guardians of the civil oath become the new priesthood.* There is no escape from theocracy. Theocracy is an inescapable concept. In every society, some god must rule. Some priesthood must represent this god.

2. Denial and Consequences

Churches today do not teach this view of the civil oath. If they ever heard of the church's God-given legal status as the guardian of the civil oath, they would deny it. The church has sought to abdicate its responsibility in this area. This illegitimate abdication of authority does not eliminate binding theocratic civil oaths in history; it merely allows representatives of some other god to establish a rival theocratic civil order. There is no neutrality.

Churches today find themselves persecuted by fee-seeking lawyers and the state.[57] What else did they expect? Did they really believe in the myth of neutrality, that highly convenient judicial immunity for humanist power-seekers, that boundary of deception? The non-revolutionary branches of the Mennonites (post-1535), Baptists, and Lutherans have always believed in it, of course, but why did Calvinists ever take the bait? Did they really believe in the existence of some permanently neutral civil arena between covenant-breakers and covenant-keepers? The myth of neutrality should not appeal to the most judicial of theologians in the religion second only to Judaism in its concern for judicial details. Yet for four centuries, Calvinists have adopted natural law theory and its corollary, the myth of neutrality.

Bible-believing churches publicly proclaim, "We're under grace, not law." This proclamation is utter nonsense; *Christians today are in fact under humanist lawyers*: a judgment of God that should be obvious to all Christians but which is acknowledged by very few. Because God's church is unwilling to serve as the guardian of the civil oath,

(Dec. 1992), pp. 8–11. The most forthright declaration of this religion that I have come across is by James Larratt Battersby, *The Holy Book of Adolph Hitler* (Southport, England: German World Church of Europe, 1952). Battersby announced: "Nordic man, with whom walks eternally the Spirit of Adolph Hitler, stands on the Rock of the Redeeming Blood of his Race" (p. 15). On the suppression of the German churches, see J. S. Conway, *The Nazi Persecution of the Churches, 1933–45* (New York: Basic Books, 1968). On Lutheranism's roots and theological liberalism's roots of the surrender by the German churches, see Paul B. Means, *Things That Are Caesar's: The Genesis of the German Church Conflict* (New York: Round Table Press, 1935), Part I.

56. North, *Political Polytheism*.

57. J. Shelby Sharpe, "The Nuclear Attack on Christianity in America Has Begun in Earnest," *Chalcedon Report* (Nov. 1990), pp. 2–9.

the state imposes a rival law-order in terms of a rival oath. The state's goal is clear: to disinherit the church.

Conclusion

We see in this law an application of the Bible's fundamental principle of civil justice: victim's rights. The twin issues in this case involve the defense of a pair of judicial boundaries: private property and the civil oath. The ecclesiastical issue is this: What is the meaning of the trespass offering? I argue that the trespass offering is tied judicially to the defense of the civil oath against the criminal who falsely declares his innocence. That is, *there is more to a legitimate defense of the civil oath than the imposition of civil sanctions*.

The primary victim of the theft is God, against whose majesty the theft is committed. The secondary victim is the earthly victim. He then becomes the primary agent of God in this legal dispute between God and the criminal. God brings a lawsuit against the criminal in His heavenly court; He authorizes the victim to bring a lawsuit in a civil court. This is the biblical principle of victim's rights.

An important goal of the criminal justice system is to gain a confession from the criminal before a trial is held or a verdict is handed down. This reflects the desire of God to gain a public confession from the sinner before his death, and therefore before his heavenly trial begins.[58] To gain early confessions, God's law imposes escalating penalties for each formal judicial stage transgressed by the criminal's deceptive activities. Put another way, each time the criminal transgresses one of these legal barriers—these judicial opportunities for public confession—the penalties increase.

The court defends the rights of the victim. The church defends the integrity of the court, i.e., its right to be told the truth by the criminal. The criminal's transgression of ownership boundaries sanctified—set apart judicially—the stolen property. The lying criminal owes the victim double restitution because of the theft if the court convicts him. He owes him full restoration if he admits his guilt before the court tries him. He also owes the victim a double tithe (20%) because the act of theft sanctified the stolen goods. Finally, he owes God a sacrifice through the mediating institution of the priesthood because of his false oath in civil court.

58. "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. 10:9–10).

The 20% penalty payment to the victim is still in force in New Testament times. It was not tied uniquely to the Promised Land or the Mosaic Covenant priesthood. There has to be a double-tithe (priestly) penalty payment in order to de-sanctify the stolen property. He pays this penalty to the victim, not to the church.

If the criminal confesses his sin to the victim before the trial begins, he escapes the threat of double restitution. A 20% penalty payment to the victim is sufficient, plus the return of the asset or its present market value. In Mosaic Israel, if he had also lied to the court regarding his theft, he had to offer the sacrifice of a ram. Today, he would confess to church authorities and make whatever sacrifice they impose on him, not to exceed the comparable value of a ram in the Mosaic economy.

INTRODUCTION TO PART II: CLEANSING (LEV. 8–16)

> *For I am the* Lord *your God: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I am holy: neither shall ye defile yourselves with any manner of creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. For I am the* Lord *that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy.*
>
> LEVITICUS 11:44–45

God here identifies Himself as a holy God. He also identifies Himself as the God who had delivered the Israelites from the bondage of Egypt. This self-identification as the God who delivered His people in history is the identifying aspect of point two of the Mosaic Covenant: historical prologue.[1] In Leviticus 11:45, God identifies Himself as possessing lawful authority over His people: hierarchy.

Leviticus 8–16 is concerned with the priesthood in general,[2] but with cleansing in particular. The priesthood was in charge of identifying and attending to the marks of ritual and physical uncleanness in society: food laws, childbirth laws, leprosy, discharges of the flesh, and the day of atonement.[3] This section begins with the ritual washing of the priests: Aaron and his sons (Lev. 8:6). It ends with the day of atonement, which is specifically identified as a means of cleansing: "For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the Lord" (Lev. 16:30).

Ritual cleanliness was mandatory for a nation of priests (Ex. 19:6) that had been set apart (sanctified, made holy) by God as His special people. This national separation was the heart of the Mosaic Covenant. Cleanliness laws were temporal boundary devices that had a

1. Meredith G. Kline, *The Structure of Biblical Authority*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1972), pp. 53–57.

2. The Greek word for priest is *hierus*, as in hierarchy.

covenantal function for as long as the Mosaic Covenant was valid. To enforce them, there had to be a priesthood for the nation of priests. Like the nation of priests, these ordained priests had boundaries placed around them as a separate family (Aaron) in a separate tribe (Levi). It was their task to identify holiness and unholiness, cleanliness and uncleanliness (Lev. 10:10). As we find in the laws governing leprosy, their very physical presence inside the boundary of a house made unclean a house infected with the disease. It was not legally unclean until a priest crossed its boundary. This was analogous to the moral uncleanliness of Canaan, which became judicially unclean—and subject to God's corporate negative sanctions—only after the Israelites had crossed the Jordan river and entered the land.

8

WINE AS A BOUNDARY MARKER

And the LORD spake unto Aaron, saying, Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations: And that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean; And that ye may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the LORD hath spoken unto them by the hand of Moses.

LEVITICUS 10:8–11

The theocentric meaning of this passage is that God has the authority to establish boundaries that temporarily separate a holy person from a blessing.

A. Wine as God's Property

The wine in this passage is analogous to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This prohibition applied to the priests only while they were inside the tabernacle or temple. There is no reference to the Levites. For a priest to drink wine inside the tabernacle constituted a boundary violation. The tabernacle-temple was God's place of residence in Israel. It was there that He manifested His judicial presence. This law had something to do with the special presence of God and the holiness of God. It also had something to do with the office of priest. It had nothing to do with a general prohibition against wine.

There can be no doubt that the average Israelite was allowed to drink wine. He was specifically authorized by God to drink it at the third-year feast. "And thou shalt bestow that money for whatsoever thy soul lusteth after, for oxen, or for sheep, or for wine, or for strong drink, or for whatsoever thy soul desireth: and thou shalt eat there

before the LORD thy God, and thou shalt rejoice, thou, and thine household" (Deut. 14:26).[1] Wine is described in the Bible as a blessing from God:

> And he will love thee, and bless thee, and multiply thee: he will also bless the fruit of thy womb, and the fruit of thy land, thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep, in the land which he sware unto thy fathers to give thee (Deut. 7:13).

> That I will give you the rain of your land in his due season, the first rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil (Deut. 11:14).[2]

> And as soon as the commandment came abroad, the children of Israel brought in abundance the firstfruits of corn, wine, and oil, and honey, and of all the increase of the field; and the tithe of all things brought they in abundantly (II Chron. 31:5).

God even goes so far as to say that the *absence of wine* is a sign of His *covenantal curse* against a covenanted nation: "And he shall eat the fruit of thy cattle, and the fruit of thy land, until thou be destroyed: which also shall not leave thee either corn, wine, or oil, or the increase of thy kine, or flocks of thy sheep, until he have destroyed thee" (Deut. 28:51). In the New Testament, we read of the spirit of prohibitionism—the prohibition of God's gifts.

> Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer (I Tim. 4:1–5).

This raises a theological question: Why this unique Mosaic covenantal prohibition for the priests? Wenham understood that there is a problem here. "The commands given to Aaron, however, are strange. Why should a ban on drinking alcohol be introduced here, and then be coupled with instructions about teaching the Israelites?"[3] He correctly identified both aspects of the prohibition: (1) clear-headed offi-

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1. Gary North, *Inheritance and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Deuteronomy*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [1999] 2012), ch. 35.
2. *Ibid*., ch. 28.
3. Gordon J. Wenham, *The Book of Leviticus* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1979), p. 158.

ciating over the administration of the sacrifices, and (2) the teaching function of the priests. But he avoids discussing a very difficult and all-too-obvious problem: teaching by the priests that took place outside the boundaries of the tabernacle and the temple.

Why did the prohibition against wine cease when the priest left the tabernacle? Wasn't clear instruction in the word of God just as important outside the temple's boundaries as inside? The ban did not apply to the Levites, yet they also had a teaching function. Their office was lower than the priestly office. They did not speak with comparable authority. Was this additional authority of the priesthood an aspect of the ban?

The solution is found in what should be the central presupposition of biblical economics: *God's ownership of the world*, which is an implication of His creation of the world.

The boundary of the tabernacle involved a prohibition regarding their personal use of wine. Wine was required in the sacrifices. The wine of Mosaic sacrifice was to be poured out exclusively to God and never consumed by the priest. It was not burned on the altar because, like leaven, it was a fermented product.[4] Wine accompanied the offerings. "And the fourth part of an hin of wine for a drink offering shalt thou prepare with the burnt offering or sacrifice, for one lamb" (Num. 15:5). "And the drink offering thereof shall be the fourth part of an hin for the one lamb: in the holy place shalt thou cause the strong wine to be poured unto the LORD for a drink offering" (Num. 28:7). Like the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, wine was specially reserved for God in the Mosaic sacrifices. *The wine of sacrifice was exclusively His property*. Also like the boundary in the garden, this was not intended to be a permanent boundary, but it was a requirement of that dispensation. Contrary to the anti-alcohol heresy,[5] it was not that God despised wine; it was that He regarded it as exclusively His possession in formal worship ceremonies. He saved the best for Himself.

B. Sobriety and Sanctuary

The priest was the person who offered sacrifices, but he was also the person who authoritatively interpreted and applied the law of God in

4. Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, vol. 3 of *The Anchor Bible* (New York: Doubleday, 1991), p. 189.

5. For a critique of this heresy, see Kenneth L. Gentry, Jr., *God Gave Us Wine: What the Bible Says About Alcohol* (Lincoln, California: Oakdown, 2001). See also North, *Inheritance and Dominion*, Appendix G: "Strong Drink."

formal judgment. This authority to pronounce judgment was also a possession of the king, who was also prohibited from drinking wine. "It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine; nor for princes strong drink: Lest they drink, and forget the law, and pervert the judgment of any of the afflicted" (Prov. 31:4–5). This advice—it was not a Mosaic law—governed the highest civil magistrates: kings and princes. The identifying issue for the king was the enforcement of justice. The king was the final civil court of appeal. Was this high-court status also the issue for the priests within the tabernacle? In some cases it was, when the priest declared the law and then imposed sanctions on someone who had come to bring a sacrifice or during one of the required feasts. Some legal counseling may have gone on. But the imposition of sanctions was not what the text refers to. The two stated reasons for this priestly prohibition were related to two priestly tasks: distinguishing clean from unclean and teaching the people God's law.

1. Boundary Marker

The priest knew the details of the sacrificial system. He acted as a representative agent: a *boundary* (mediator) between God and the people of Israel, but also between Israel and the world. Wine might disorient him. Such self-inflicted disorientation was not permitted. Therefore, if the priests failed to officiate correctly at the sacrifices, God would bring sanctions against both priesthood and people. These boundaries had to be respected. This required sobriety, but it also required the priests to respect God as the sole owner of the drink offerings. More was involved here than the mere sobriety of the priests. This law rested on the distinction between holy and unholy. In this case, the priest, as a fallen man and fallen mankind's agent, was unholy or unclean. He could not touch wine within the confines of the tabernacle. God is holy; wine was His exclusive property inside the tabernacle. This did not change during the period of the Mosaic Covenant. Only in the New Covenant era, after the resurrection and ascension of Christ, did wine again become lawful for laymen in worship, as it had been for Abram (Gen. 14:18).

Within the tabernacle, there could be discussion and study, just as there was later in the temple (Luke 2:46). When discussing God's law, men are to be alert. It is their proper service before God, their calling. But the prohibition applied only to the tabernacle. Why not outside? Because the focus of concern was not the teaching of the law as such; *it was the teaching of the law in a holy place*. A holy place is a

sanctuary: a place sanctified by God. The declaration of the law from within the tabernacle had far greater authority than the declaration of God's law outside the tabernacle. God dwelt with Israel inside the tabernacle. His presence was judicial: throne-related (the mercy seat: Ex. 25:17–22). Any declaration of His law from within His own house had the force of supreme law. The law declared here was not mere advice. It could not be appealed. This was Israel's highest ecclesiastical court of appeal. *The priest was acting as a boundary guard on holy ground*. This was the boundary. It was not simply that his office was holy; his environment was holy. Jesus did not apply a whip to the backsides of the moneychangers outside the temple, but only inside. It was here that God was most offended. The temple was a house of prayer, the place where men brought their cases before God and sought God's authoritative pronouncements.

2. The Third Book of the Pentateuch

This interpretation is consistent with the structure and role of the Book of Leviticus. It is the third book in the Pentateuch. It is associated with the third point of the biblical covenant model. That point refers to biblical law: moral and judicial boundaries. It also relates to geographical boundaries. *Private property is the outworking of this principle of lawful boundaries*. God marks off certain boundaries, and then He assigns these marked parcels to specific individuals as His lawful stewards. The eighth commandment, which prohibits theft, is the third in a series of five kingly commandments.[6]

The priest within the tabernacle was a student of biblical law. He was a *boundary guard* for the people in their role as God's dominion agents. As God's dwelling place, the tabernacle was the place of God's judgment. The tabernacle was therefore *sanctified*—set apart judicially by God. When in the geographical-judgmental presence of God in the Mosaic Covenant era, a priest had to avoid anything that would make him lightheaded, meaning artificially lighthearted. A priest was also someone who offered sacrifices as a boundary guard whose efforts placated the wrath of God. Offering sacrifices was the crucial official activity within the tabernacle. If a priest was not alert to the ritual requirements of the sacrifices, he risked bringing under judgment both himself and those represented by him.

There was a secondary consideration. If the priesthood as a whole

6. Gary North, *Authority and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Exodus* (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, 2012), Part 2: *Decalogue and Dominion* (1986), ch. 28.

failed to declare and observe God's law correctly, this would undermine all lawful judgment: self-judgment, family judgment, civil judgment, and ecclesiastical judgment. This would in turn undermine the dominion activities of the family, the primary agent of dominion in history (Gen. 1:26–28).[7] The priest was therefore to listen to God's word carefully, for it is a word of judgment. This word included His liturgical word. He was required to adhere to it precisely, just as men are to adhere to His written word precisely. The priest's actions in the tabernacle were therefore representative, which is why Jesus was so outraged by what was going on in the temple (Matt. 21:13).[8]

The king was analogous to God. The king brought negative sanctions in history. He was required to study the law daily (Deut. 17:18–20), but he also had to execute judgment. His task was more closely associated with point four of the biblical covenant: sanctions. Thus, the king was under a sort of double prohibition. He was unwise ever to drink wine, whereas the priests could lawfully drink wine outside the boundaries of the tabernacle.[9]

3. Permanent Prohibitions?

The question arises: Are these prohibitions still in force? The fundamentalist insists that every redeemed person is now a priest. Because of the annulment of Israel's feasts, Christians supposedly are no longer authorized to drink strong drink. The prohibition against drinking wine inside the temple has now been extended to the whole world, the fundamentalist insists. The New Testament is therefore seen as far more hostile to wine than the Old Testament was.

The problem with this viewpoint is that wine was legitimate for the priest outside of tabernacle services, unless he had taken a Nazarite's vow (Num. 6:20; Jud. 13:7), which also prohibited grape juice and even raisins—an aged grape product not on the fundamentalists' list of innately evil products. Why should the extension of the priesthood to every Christian require the removal of wine from the tables of the

7. Kenneth L. Gentry, Jr., *The Greatness of the Great Commission: The Christian Enterprise in a Fallen World* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1990), ch. 9.

8. Gary North, *Priorities and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Matthew*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2000] 2012), ch. 42.

9. R. K. Harrison did not discuss the "inside-outside" aspect of the prohibition. He relates the prohibition to the teaching function of the priesthood, as well as the ritual function, ignoring the obvious: most of this priestly public teaching would have been conducted outside the tabernacle. But there the absolute prohibition did not apply. R. K. Harrison, *Leviticus: An Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 1980), pp. 114–18.

land? It is the essence of Christianity's doctrine of the priesthood of all believers that all believers who are members in good standing are allowed to enter the temple and partake of the communion feast of God. God's full table is now open to us. He now shares with us by His grace the wine that had been ritually poured out exclusively to Him under the Mosaic Covenant. The entire priesthood can now lawfully partake of this wine inside the temple.

The Roman Catholic Church has reversed the Mosaic Covenant's prohibition in formal worship: only the priest may drink communion wine, since it supposedly becomes Christ's literal blood.[10] The Catholic layman is denied access to the full table. Outside of worship, the Catholic Church teaches, wine is as legitimate today as it was in the Mosaic economy.

In contrast to both positions, fundamentalist and Roman Catholic, the Reformed or Lutheran Christian says that this Mosaic restriction on the priest was annulled by the establishment of the Lord's Supper, which commands all followers of Christ to take wine. Presumably, the New Covenant king is also allowed to drink wine, since the King of kings made wine at the wedding at Cana. Jesus made wine, not grape juice. The reason why it was customary to serve the less expensive wine later in a feast (John 2:10) was that people's sense of taste would have been impaired by the previous consumption of wine. A declining sense of discriminating taste is not a problem with the consumption of grape juice. (I have never heard of "discriminating taste" regarding grape juice. International grape juice competitions are quite rare. The product is seldom advertised.)

C. The Boundary of the Heart[11]

The Mosaic Covenant required that the tablets of the law be placed in the Ark of the Covenant. They were written on stone. The New Covenant is different. Now the law is written on the hearts of regenerate people. The old sanctuary is no more. The Epistle to the Hebrews announces with respect to the annulment of the Mosaic Covenant and the Mosaic sanctuary:

10. On what legal basis are Catholic layman allowed to eat Christ's body? What is so special about the blood?

11. "And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live" (Deut. 30:6). "Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, and take away the foreskins of your heart, ye men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem: lest my fury come forth like fire, and burn that none can quench it, because of the evil of your doings" (Jer. 4:4).

> For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away. **Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary**. For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread; which is called the **sanctuary**. **And after the second veil**, the tabernacle which is called **the Holiest of all**; Which had the golden censer, and **the ark of the covenant** overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant (Heb. 8:7–9:4).

The contrast here is between the Old Covenant and the New, between the old tabernacle and the new. The main issue in this passage is *the erasure of physical boundaries* that had separated the Mosaic Covenant worshipper from the tablets of the law and the exclusive area of the high priest's annual sacrifice. After the invasion by Babylon, the Ark of the Covenant was lost forever. But the veil of the temple performed the same separating function. This ended with the death of Christ. "And the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom" (Mark 15:38). The Mosaic Covenant that God made with their fathers has been superseded. The boundary that had kept the vast majority of Israelites from exercising righteous covenantal judgment had been the barrier in their hearts. The Holy Spirit has now come and has circumcised the hearts of God's New Covenant people (Rom. 2:29). The Mosaic Covenant's laws of sacrifice also no longer apply. The *preservation of justice* is now based primarily on the *presence of God's covenant law in the hearts of God's people*. Covenant law moves outward from the heart to every human institution. In this sense, the New Covenant broke the institutional boundaries of the Mosaic Covenant. "For there is no difference between the Jew and the

Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him" (Rom. 10:12). That sovereign Lord rules in terms of His law.

One physical boundary between man and God in the Mosaic Covenant was wine. The priest could not drink it during worship. It was a ritual barrier. Wine in worship visibly represented a judicial boundary between God and man, just as the tree of knowledge did in the garden. Wine still does, but in a totally different way. *The sacraments physically mark the boundary between God and man*. This is the reason for the ritual use of wine in New Covenant times. Those who do not have legal access to this wine are warned by the very existence of the ceremony that they are judicially separated from God. The *wine boundary* keeps covenant-breakers outside the special protection of God—His positive sanctions—but God requires covenant-keepers to partake of it.[12] This includes covenant-keeping kings.

D. The Supreme Civil Ruler

Then what of the strong advice against the civil ruler's use of alcohol? "It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine; nor for princes strong drink: Lest they drink, and forget the law, and pervert the judgment of any of the afflicted" (Prov. 31:4–5). Did this advice cease with the extension of the kingship to the New Covenant citizen? Or does the advice now extend to the New Covenant citizen because of his additional authority?

To discover the answer, let us first examine the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. All New Covenant citizens are required to partake. This includes all civil rulers. They may refuse to accept the terms of church membership, but, morally speaking, they are supposed to.[13] The exclusion of the common people of God from the holy (legally separated) food of the sacrament is no longer valid. The priest is no longer given special access to the table and the shewbread; the wine is no longer to be poured out as an offering. The primary threat of wine in temple service was not that it can cause drunkenness; the primary threat was based on a ritual (judicially representational) boundary between man and God. The threat to the priest was his violation of a sanctuary boundary, not his drunkenness as such.

This was not the case with the supreme civil ruler during the Mosaic economy. Here, the threat was said to be drunkenness. That threat

12. An exception is valid for former alcoholics: weaker brethren (I Cor. 8:9).

13. Judicially speaking, too. See Gary North, *Political Polytheism: The Myth of Pluralism* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1989), ch. 2.

still exists. Drinking wine was advised against by Proverbs 31, but this had nothing to do with ritual participation in temple worship, to which kings did not have legal access. The warning of Proverbs 31 is therefore not annulled today. The question today is: What was the nature of the restriction? The answer is not found in the Mosaic law itself. The prohibition does not appear among the case laws. It appears in the wisdom literature. This does not mean that it may be safely ignored by civil rulers. It means only that there are no predictable, covenantal, negative civil or ecclesiastical sanctions attached to it.

In ancient kingship, the office was inseparable from the person. There was no boundary between his person and his office. In the modern world, this is no longer true. There are no modern kings who possess supreme judicial power by virtue of their persons, except in a few small, backward, tribal nations. In modern judicial theory, all supreme rulers can be deposed. They are not "to the office born." There is no doctrine of the divine right of kings, meaning an office beyond which there is no earthly legal appeal.

The drinking habits of the Mosaic Covenant era king had to be placed under tight control, and this control was mainly self-control. There was no higher earthly judicial authority for men to appeal to except the priesthood or a prophet when a king failed to exercise lawful judgment. Kingship was not an occupation; it was a lifetime position. There was often a public anointing of the king. So, his self-control had to be superior to that exercised by common men or even priests except when they were officiating inside the temple's boundaries. The senior civil ruler was not supposed to drink wine, because drunkenness in him was too great a threat to the whole commonwealth, not just to him. He was the final civil court of appeal. The alcohol issue for him was both judicial and representational. He held a monopoly judicial position, and he held it for life. *Remove the equation of office and person, and you remove the judicial basis of the Proverbs prohibition*. Lifetime control over the highest judicial office in the land did bring with it a unique degree of personal responsibility, but kings are no more. Civil authority is deliberately divided in modern governments.

Today, we legally separate the office from the person who occupies it. A *legal boundary* is present that separates the civil office from its holder. No one has discussed this post-medieval development more profoundly than Max Weber. Writing after World War I, Weber observed: "It is decisive for the modern loyalty to an office that, in the pure type, it does not establish a relationship to a *person*, like the

vassal's or disciple's faith under feudal or patrimonial authority, but rather is devoted to *impersonal* and *functional* purposes. . . . The political official—at least in the fully developed modern state—is not considered the personal servant of a ruler."[14] The ruler's word is not law. His word is governed by law. He answers to courts and voters. They can bring judicial sanctions against him if he violates the law. They can remove him from office.

Thus, in a world without kingship, there is no longer any binding prohibition against alcohol. In any case, this law never did apply to civil rulers generally. It only applied to the king. The king was analogous to the high priest. Both were at the top of their respective judicial hierarchies. Today, there are neither high priests nor kings. European kingship formally disappeared at the end of the First World War, but in Great Britain, it disappeared judicially in the late seventeenth century when Parliament asserted final sovereignty during the Glorious Revolution of 1688–89.

Then who today is the king? To whom does the law apply? To no one specifically, but to everyone in his capacity as judge. Today, all citizens exercise civil rule when they vote. The Reformation's doctrine, "every (redeemed) man a priest," becomes the modern democratic principle of secular humanism, "every citizen a king." But of course no citizen is a true king. There are no true kings any longer. There is no supreme civil authority, except perhaps during wartime, when one man is designated commander-in-chief.[15] Then on what basis today can a citizen-civil ruler boundary distinction based on alcohol be maintained? The threat of excessive alcohol consumption is now everyone's threat: "Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit" (Eph. 5:17–18). The Holy Spirit fills each of God's covenant people, not just the civil rulers. To be drunk with wine threatens this supernatural filling. The biblical issue here is the righteous exercise of wisdom. It was in the Mosaic Covenant, too.

Negative sanctions against civil magistrates who drink during their assigned hours for rendering judgment are not specified in the Bible. These sanctions could be political, although there are few in-

14. Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, eds. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich (New York: Bedminster Press, [1924] 1968), p. 959.

15. Winston Churchill drank heavily throughout his tenure as Prime Minister of England during World War II. He began drinking in late afternoon and continued until late at night, yet this did not seem to impede his judgment. John Charmley, *Churchill: The End of Glory—A Political Biography* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1993), p. 549.

dications that drunkenness has in any significant way reduced the electoral success of politicians. When Christian political activist Paul Weyrich in 1989 challenged the appointment of former United States Senator John Tower to the office of Secretary of Defense because of Tower's reputation as a heavy drinker and womanizer, Weyrich was initially challenged by the committee of United States Senators who were responsible for recommending to the entire Senate the vote to approve or disapprove the President's nomination. At first, it looked as though no one in high office would take Weyrich seriously. Only weeks later did public pressure build against Tower, officially because of his financial connections with the armaments industry. The Senate eventually refused to confirm the nomination. The President had to nominate someone else. But former Senator and former Presidential nominee Barry Goldwater ridiculed Weyrich's objections. Referring to the capitol city of Washington, D.C., he said: "If they had chased every man or woman out of this town who had shacked up with somebody else or gotten drunk, there'd be no government."[16] From time to time, scandals will lead to a politician's demise, but seldom is drunkenness alone sufficient grounds of the public's wrath. This sin is too easily covered up by his colleagues.

E. Breaking Cultural Boundaries

Grape juice cannot expand until it begins to ferment. It then loses its character as grape juice. The kingdom of God broke the boundaries of the Old Covenant, just as new wine breaks old wineskins (Matt. 9:17). The imagery of broken wineskins testifies to a new, expanding kingdom that is no longer confined by old geographical and cultural boundaries. The new kingdom means a new mentality: dominion-oriented, expansionist, and comprehensive in its scope. This imagery was present in Old Covenant Israel, as the use of wine indicates: wine was not universally prohibited, and prior to the Mosaic economy, it was even allowed to the priesthood. "And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God" (Gen. 14:18). Isaac's blessing of Jacob demonstrates the link between wine and dominion:

> Therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine: Let people serve thee, and nations bow down

16. John G. Tower, *Consequences: A Personal and Political Memoir* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1991), p. 330. Tower died in a plane crash a few months after this book was published.

> to thee: be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee: cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee (Gen. 27:28–29).

The boundary of wine for the priests testified that Israel was under temporary constraints geographically. The Mosaic element of worldwide dominion was not operable to the same extent as it is in the New Covenant.

The worldview of fundamentalism denies the reality of an expanding kingdom in history, meaning before Christ returns in person to set up an earthly kingdom. The kingdom of God is said to be limited to the family and the church. In some extreme formulations, the kingdom of God is equated only with the church; even the family is understood to be outside it. Wrote English Baptist pastor Peter Masters: "God is especially concerned with His people. He will not give His kingdom to the world, nor will He give the world to His kingdom. The kingdom of God is the church. . . ."[17] In such a formulation, the state and society in general do not qualify even as aspects of the kingdom of God. The fundamentalist does not believe that there will ever be a time in church history when God's kingdom will transform social institutions. Masters went on in this vein: "Where Christians have previously attempted to construct even a very limited Christian society their efforts have been sadly frustrated."[18] According to this view of history, a millennium of medieval society was either at bottom religiously neutral or else it was not really a society. This is the history of Western civilization according to Voltaire, Diderot, and the Enlightenment generally. It is fundamentalism's worldview, too, which is why there is a continuing operational alliance between pietism and humanism.[19]

Grape juice is the pietist's preference: a sweet, red liquid that looks like wine but has no bite, bubble, or joy to it. Fundamentalists do not use wine in any form because wine can be misused by undisciplined people. (They are not equally wary about their diets and their weight. It is fermented sugar that arouses their wrath, not unfermented.)[20]

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17. Peter Masters, "World Dominion: The High Ambition of Reconstructionism," *Sword & Trowel* (May 1990), p. 18.

18. *Ibid*., p. 19.

19. Gary North, *Millennialism and Social Theory* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1990), pp. 43–44, 135–36, 144, 147, 151, 179–80, 258, 277–78.

20. Typical of the fundamentalist mindset is the concordance at the back of the *Scofield Reference Bible* (Oxford University Press, 1909). If you are trying to locate Deuteronomy 21:20, "And they shall say unto the elders of his city, This our son is stubborn

The imagery of broken wineskins also does not appeal to pietistic fundamentalists. They want to keep those old wineskins intact. The thought of cultural wine that breaks the institutional structures of society is foreign to their thinking. Like wine, cultural and political power can be abused, so they reject it as a matter of morality. Thus, Christians are supposed to shun power, influence, and culture in the same way that they are to shun wine. Culture means dirty movies and perversion; people who even study cultural affairs are risking being engulfed by a morally polluting worldliness. Rev. Masters was emphatic about the relationship between "endless discussion of social, economic, educational and political theories" and the enjoyment of art, which is inescapably worldly. "In many cases it leads in a subtle way to worldliness. (After all, if Christians are commissioned to take dominion over the arts, and so on, they had better start by participating in them and enjoying them.)"[21] Understand, this was *Dr*. Masters—theologically consistent Dr. Masters—not some raving backwoods preacher of the early nineteenth-century American frontier. As the institutional heir of Charles Spurgeon, Masters nevertheless abandoned the broad cultural learning of his Calvinistic predecessor, who had no college degree but did have a wide-ranging interest in society and culture.

Pietistic fundamentalists do not have confidence in those fellow Christians who would exercise public authority in the name of Christ and in terms of His law. They prefer to be ruled by pagans. Similarly, they have no faith in culture.

F. Boundaries of Work and Play

The biblical office of king no longer exists; therefore, neither does the judicial prohibition against alcohol. The subordinate civil offices do exist, but the prohibition never did apply to them (Deut. 14:26). What about any other basis of prohibition? The author of Proverbs tells us that "To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven" (Eccl. 3:1). There is also "A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace" (Eccl. 3:8). There are times to celebrate and times to exercise judgment. These times

and rebellious, he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton, and a drunkard," you can find it by looking up the word "drunkard," but not "glutton." Similarly with Proverbs 23:21: "For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty: and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags." There is no reference at all to "glutton" in the concordance.

21. Masters, "World Dominion," p. 19.

are not the same. Thus, when the subordinate ruler exercised judgment under the Mosaic Covenant, he was presumably not supposed to drink, just as the priest was not to drink wine when officiating. The key factor here is *officiating*—to exercise the office. Why should we imagine that this has changed? It hasn't.

It is clear why liquor and justice do not mix. The ruler is required by God to render judgment in His name. This judgment must apply the general principles of biblical justice to specific infractions. This work takes considerable skill. A person who is under the influence of alcohol in this task is to that degree not under the influence of God's law. But why should this not be true in every other instance? Why is the decision-making of civil law crucial? The answer: because the civil magistrate renders judgment in God's name.

Whenever good judgment is required for the safety of others, equally rigorous standards are required. Pilots of airplanes are not allowed to drink liquor for hours prior to flights. Were it not so common for automobile drivers to drink before driving, thereby making it difficult for prosecutors to get juries to convict drunk drivers, harsh economic sanctions would be applied to those driving while intoxicated. Other people are at risk; thus, the person under the influence of alcohol or drugs is a threat to society.

But what about after work? Why should alcohol be prohibited, if the person does not subsequently drive? What about relaxation? There is no biblical prohibition. The enjoyment of conviviality is sometimes enhanced by the loosening of inhibitions that alcohol produces. This is the "merry heart" phenomenon: the reduction of worldly cares that interfere with interpersonal relationships. The merry heart is a legitimate goal when one's work is completed. "Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God now accepteth thy works" (Eccl. 9:7). Anyone who would translate the Hebrew word for wine as "grape juice" in this passage is personally unfamiliar with the merrying effects of wine—and proud of it!

Modern fundamentalism views the God of the Old Testament as horribly harsh. For example, God's law requires witnesses to stone those convicted of a capital crime. "The hands of the witnesses shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterward the hands of all the people. So thou shalt put the evil away from among you" (Deut. 17:7). Such judicial barbarism is not required today, they tell us. "We're under grace, not law." (In fact, Christians are today univer-

sally under covenant-breakers and their laws.) Yet at the same time, they view the God of Israel as far too morally lax, allowing people to drink alcohol. In both cases, Mosaic law is a great embarrassment to them. They do not consider an alternative viewpoint, namely, that pietistic fundamentalism is a great embarrassment to God.[22]

Conclusion

Is the prohibition against wine judicially relevant in New Testament times? No. The offices to which the prohibition applied—priest and king—no longer exist. The average citizen has legal access to the offices of minister and senior civil ruler, if he meets certain specified judicial criteria. Neither office is attained through inheritance in modern society. The Mosaic priesthood has not been inherited since its demise at the fall of Jerusalem.

The prohibition against wine for priests was limited by the boundary of formal worship before God's throne. The issue here was the *ritual monopoly over wine* possessed by God. He refused to share this wine with the people or their representatives. Holy Communion changed this: ministers and members can and must partake of God's blessing. The prohibition applied to kings because of the unique judicial boundary of their own persons. The issue here was the proper rendering of judgment, not ritual exclusion.

The warning to the king is still with us: when rendering formal judgment or performing actions that place others under risk, wine and strong drink are still prohibited. Wine is for celebration after daily work is over. A mild alteration of the senses in this case is legitimate, for the responsibility of rendering daily judgment is past. This points to a view of life that renounces the stress of perpetual, inherited responsibility—the kind of responsibility appropriate only to Old Covenant kings. The pressures of New Covenant responsibility ebb and flow; they are not to become continual. The internally stressful lives of modern men point to their violation of the biblical rhythm of responsibility and celebration. Instead of hard work followed by relaxation, men today adopt killing stress and worry alternating with mindless, addictive escapism: distilled liquor, drugs, and television.

We are not to become either alcoholics or workaholics. We are also not to become either abstainers or slothful. Alcoholism is a denial of

22. Reformed pietism is also equally embarrassed by the Old Testament. Its defenders are repulsed by the thought of the capital sanction of stoning, but some of them do enjoy drinking.

personal responsibility. Abstaining from all liquor is also a denial of personal responsibility: "If I take one drink, I'll become an alcoholic."[23] Both are wrong. Workaholism is a denial of God's sovereignty. It is the attitude of autonomy: "My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth" (Deut. 8:17b).[24] Slothfulness is a denial of man's responsibility.

The New Testament prohibition against drunkenness is a boundary against alcoholism (Eph. 5:17–18). But God also mandates fermented wine for His Supper, a judicial rejection of the mentality of the absolute prohibition against liquor, which in turn leads to the withdrawal from culture and its responsibilities. Similarly, the law of the sabbath is an affront to workaholics: a judicial barrier. It is also an affront to the slothful: six days we are to work.

Responsibility involves the recognition *and honoring* of the boundary between hard work and addiction to work. It also involves recognizing *and honoring* the boundary between feasting and gluttony, between making merry and getting drunk. Jesus' enemies accused Him of having transgressed both of these boundaries: "The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified of her children" (Matt. 11:19).

Modern man thinks of himself as wise, but he is foolish. He refuses to recognize God's boundaries. He ignores them and then risks falling into personal addiction, or else he creates absolute but artificial boundaries where none exist in God's word, and he then falls into a cramped personal legalism that frequently produces cultural irrelevance. Man finds many ways to deny God's boundaries. These ways are all illegitimate.

23. This may be true for recovered alcoholics. They are under a God's physiological curse because of their former rebellion.

24. North, *Inheritance and Dominion*, ch. 21.

9

BIBLICAL QUARANTINE

And the leper in whom the plague is, his clothes shall be rent, and his head bare, and he shall put a covering upon his upper lip, and shall cry, Unclean, unclean. All the days wherein the plague shall be in him he shall be defiled; he is unclean: he shall dwell alone; without the camp shall his habitation be.

LEVITICUS 13:45–46

The theocentric principle here is a boundary that is imposed by God as a means of judgment: biblical leprosy.

A. Leprosy as a Curse

We come now to the longest passage in the Bible that deals with a specific law. This is the law of plague or leprosy. It fills two very long chapters in the Bible, Leviticus 13 and 14. Leviticus 13 presents the law as it applied to the priest: examining whether or not a person had been afflicted with plague or leprosy. Leviticus 14 deals with the specified sacrifices that enabled a person who had been healed from the plague or leprosy to be cleansed judicially and then re-enter the congregation of the Lord. Leviticus 14 also deals with the extremely peculiar phenomenon, namely, plague of garments and houses.

The theocentric meaning of this law is that Mosaic-era leprosy was a sign of God's curses in history and eternity. God's curses separate some men from others. Mosaic-era leprosy testified to the ultimate separation of heaven from hell, of the New Heaven and New Earth from the lake of fire (Rev. 20:14–15). Community is therefore evidence of God's grace. Autonomy, as a theory of separation, is a demonic social theory. God's final curse against self-professed autonomous man is eternal separation.

This law was given by God directly to Moses and Aaron (v. 1). The priesthood enforced this law, not the Levites (v. 2). This means, first of all, that there was a civil function for the priesthood. The civil magistrate had to enforce the declaration of the priest. Second, while the text does not say so, this law indicates that a priest had to reside in every city. He did not offer sacrifice there. Jerusalem was the exclusive place of official sacrifice after David captured the city. The priesthood performed a civil function: declaring people and things unclean within the boundaries of a city.

I argue in this chapter that the leprosy of Leviticus was not a communicable biological disease but rather a judicial affliction. It was not what is known today as Hansen's disease. The quarantine law governing this affliction applied only within a city. Thus, it was a very peculiar disease.

B. The Plague on a House

Instead of going into great detail about the nature of either plague or leprosy as it affected the individual human being, I want to discuss the plague on a house. The plague was not simply inside the confines of the house; it was literally on it. By beginning here, I focus on what I believe is the crucial point: *this plague was judicial in its frame of reference, not biological*.[1] We can recognize this more clearly in the case of inanimate objects. The house law, which was given in the wilderness period, specified that when the people came into the land of Canaan, and built houses or inherited houses, those houses would sometimes be subjected to the curse of plague. It began: "When ye be come into the land of Canaan, which I give to you for a possession, and I put the plague of leprosy in a house of the land of your possession…" (Lev. 14:34). This law was restricted to Canaan, as we shall see.

God said that He would put the plague of leprosy on a house. When the owner of the house discovered an outbreak of mold in the house's walls, he was required to go to the priest and inform him of the fact:

> And he that owneth the house shall come and tell the priest, saying, It seemeth to me there is as it were a plague in the house: Then the priest

1. The rabbis interpreted this law as applying only to Israelites and proselytes, not to resident aliens. Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, vol. 3 of *The Anchor Bible* (New York: Doubleday, 1991), p. 772. This view is called into question because Naaman, a Syrian military leader, contracted the disease (II Kings 5). He was not an Israelite or a proselyte. The Syrians had invaded Israel (v. 2); this boundary violation may have been the basis of his leprosy, despite his honor before God (v. 1). Naaman's cure was to dip himself seven times in the Jordan River, the boundary that separated Israel from the world (v. 14).

> shall command that they empty the house, before the priest go into it to see the plague, that all that is in the house be not made unclean: and afterward the priest shall go in to see the house: And he shall look on the plague, and, behold, if the plague be in the walls of the house with hollow strakes, greenish or reddish, which in sight [are] lower than the wall; Then the priest shall go out of the house to the door of the house, and shut up the house seven days (Lev. 14:35–38).

1. The Sanctity of the Priest

It is important to understand that before entering the house, the priest saw to it that everything movable inside the house was first removed. It is specifically said that this would keep everything inside the house from becoming unclean. "Then the priest shall command that they empty the house, before the priest go into it to see the plague, that all that is in the house be not made unclean: and afterward the priest shall go in to see the house" (Lev. 14:35). After the house was emptied, the priest would go into the house. This indicates very clearly that the problem was not the spread of disease inside the house, but rather *the judicial sanctity of the priest*. If this sanctified agent were to enter the house when the house was under suspicion, this would make all of the implements and furniture of the house unclean if the house was found to be unclean. *The boundary here was primarily judicial rather than biological*. The house was not judicially unclean until the priest crossed its doorway boundary. He himself would not become unclean. When he did cross it, if he then corroborated the symptoms, everything inside the house at the time of his entrance would become unclean: walls, floors, ceilings.

The text does not say that the things inside the house would *become* unclean after the priest entered the house only if the house itself was biologically unclean. The text says that everything in the house would become legally unclean merely by the priest's entering into the house in order to inspect it. This indicates that *it was the priest's legal status, as an agent of God, that produced the unclean judicial status of the things inside the house.* The house itself was only under suspicion. Everything in the house therefore came under suspicion. It was the entrance of the priest into the house that transformed suspicion into the actual legal status of being unclean.

When the priest crossed the boundary of the house—that is to say, when he crossed the door or threshold—his legal status as a holy agent of God created the unclean status of everything inside. Conclusion: *these two chapters are primarily concerned with* ***legal status*** *rather*

than biological condition. If this was not the case, then why wasn't it mandatory to burn the furniture that had been moved outside the house? Why wasn't the furniture contagious? Because this plague was not biologically transmitted. It was judicially transmitted.

2. A Week of Testing

The priest, upon finding signs of the plague in the interior stones of the house, would then shut the house up for seven days. At the end of this period, he would return and look again. If the plague had spread in the walls of the house, then the priest had the afflicted stones removed and cast into an unclean place. This meant outside the city. Then the stones in the house near the now-missing stones would be scraped, and the dust scraped from these stones would also be cast outside the city into the specified unclean place. Then the owner would replace the missing stones. If the plague returned after the first stones had been removed, the priest would come again to see if the plague had spread into the walls of the house. If it had, the priest would then break down the walls of the house, the stones, the timber, the mortar, and everything that constituted the house, and all these materials would then be carried outside the city and cast into the unclean place (14:39–45).

The person living in the house during its time of testing became unclean every time he entered the house. He was required to wash his clothes daily. Anyone eating inside the house also became unclean, and was required to wash his clothes daily (14:47). This indicates that the problem of the house was not biological; it was judicial. Washing one's clothing was not a biological defense; it was a *ritual* defense. People in ancient Israel did not contract biologically transmitted diseases to which houses were equally vulnerable.

Even the thought of a house's being vulnerable to a disease indicates the judicial nature of these chapters. Houses today do not get diseases. Clothing does not get diseases. We are not required to burn clothing because some kind of visible mold or disease has broken out in the clothing. We may wash it or boil it or dispose of it, but we are not required by law to burn it. "Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, (Touch not; taste not; handle not; Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men?" (Col. 2:20–22). Similarly, we do not find instances where houses come under attack by such dangerous spores or

microbes that it becomes necessary to tear down the house and throw the remains outside the city. Yet it is obvious that such external afflictions were, if not common, at least possible in Old Covenant Israel. This indicates that these afflictions were part of the burden of being covenanted to God—in close proximity to the house of God, or to the covenanted people of God—and therefore greater responsibility was inescapable for the person residing inside the cities of Israel.

It was the priest's declaration of a suspected house that would make ritually unclean everything inside the house at the time that he entered it. It was not a biological organism that would make everything inside the house unclean. Individuals who entered the house would become ritually unclean, which is why they had to wash their clothes (14:46–47). It was *legal status* that was in question, not biological status. The proof of this is the requirement that a house that had been pronounced unclean and re-plastered, when found to be healed, had to have a ritual cleansing. The priest cleansed the house with two birds, cedar wood, scarlet, and hyssop (14:49–53). He killed one of the birds in an earthen vessel over running water. He took the cedar wood and the hyssop and the scarlet and the living bird and dipped them into the blood of the slain bird and in the running water then he would sprinkle the house seven times. The text actually says that the house was cleansed by the blood of the dead bird, the running water, the living bird, the cedar wood, the hyssop, and the scarlet (14:52). The legal status of *unclean* went from the house to the dead bird, and from there to the live bird. The priest then was to let the living bird out of the city into the open fields, thereby making an atonement for the house, in order to make it clean (14:53). An unclean thing could not legally remain inside the city. The bird flew away, carrying the unclean legal status of the house. Conclusion: *the threat was judicial; so was the cure*. Thus, all attempts to turn this law into a law of physical cleanliness are misguided.

C. The Diseased Individual: Separation or Inclusion

Walls, clothing, skin: they are all boundaries. They separate the inside from the outside. Mold that was visible from the outside marked the house, clothing, or person as legally unclean. If the problem was not dealt with ritually, it altered the legal status of whatever was inside the boundary.

With this background in mind, let us turn now to the diseased individual. It is very easy for the commentator to spend a lot of space

describing the details of the physical afflictions. R. K. Harrison spent several pages on such details.[2] It is easy for a person to believe that these physical details are in some way related to the details of diseases in our day—easy, but incorrect. The leprosy spoken of in these chapters was not what we call leprosy today, or Hansen's disease.[3] It was something entirely different. The treatment required by the text applies to no known skin disease, which would not disappear in a few weeks; the Bible's quarantine test period would have been medically ineffectual.[4] Therefore, Milgrom concluded, "these rules are grounded not in medicine but in ritual."[5] It was an aspect of the impurity system; it was associated with death, as we see in the case of Miriam: "Let her not be as one dead, of whom the flesh is half consumed when he cometh out of his mother's womb" (Num. 12:12).[6]

Milgrom concluded that this skin disease was inflicted because of rebellion against God: religious rather than civil crimes.[7] The problem is, the text does not say this explicitly, although the sins of Miriam (Num. 12:14–15), Gehazi (II Kings 5:27), and Uzziah (II Chron. 26:17–21) did result in their affliction.

One of the most remarkable aspects of this plague was the law governing the degree of affliction. "Then the priest shall consider: and, behold, if the leprosy have covered all his flesh, he shall pronounce him clean that hath the plague: it is all turned white: he is clean" (Lev. 13:13). What this says is that if an individual was *completely covered with leprosy*, turning his flesh entirely white, he was then pronounced *clean*. This means that he had legal access to the tabernacle or to any other element of corporate worship in Israel. He posed no threat to his neighbors, either ritually or biologically.[8] He was not contagious. We would normally think of the leprosy as being an affliction that required him to be totally separate, permanently. This is not the case. A *partial affliction* of leprosy did require his separation. So did all of the other sores and discolorations of the flesh that are described in

2. R. K. Harrison, *Leviticus: An Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity, 1980), pp. 140–47.

3. Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, p. 816. Harrison, rare among modern commentators, denied this: *Leviticus*, p. 138. Milgrom traced this confusion to the ninth-century Arab physician, John of Damascus: *Leviticus 1–16*, p. 816.

4. Milgrom cited Marvin Engel, a dermatologist: *Leviticus 1–16*, p. 817.

5. *Ibid*., p. 818.

6. *Ibid*., p. 819.

7. *Ibid*., p. 821.

8. Gordon J. Wenham, *The Book of Leviticus* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1979), p. 203.

Leviticus 13. Nevertheless, *the individual who was completely afflicted became legally clean*.

This fact is additional evidence of my thesis that the fundamental issue was not biological, but rather judicial. Rabbi S. R. Hirsch believed that this disease was sent directly by God.[9] Surely this was true in the case of a plague-infested house. "When ye be come into the land of Canaan, which I give to you for a possession, and I put the plague of leprosy in a house of the land of your possession" (Lev. 14:34). The legal issue was not biological contagion; it was obedience. "Take heed in the plague of leprosy, that thou observe diligently, and do according to all that the priests the Levites shall teach you: as I commanded them, so ye shall observe to do. Remember what the LORD thy God did unto Miriam by the way, after that ye were come forth out of Egypt" (Deut. 24:8–9). She had sinned by challenging the prophetic office of Moses (Num. 12:1–2). She was shut out of the camp for seven days (Num. 12:15)—not because of the leprosy, which had been total, but because of her rebellion (Num. 12:14).

When an individual was so completely afflicted by the whitening of his skin, *he became like God*: pure white (Dan. 7:9; Rev. 1:14). This is why God discusses man's sins as scarlet, and promises that they will be white as snow: "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isa. 1:18). The red splotchy marks on the body made the individual legally unclean. If the white leprosy replaced those marks, he became legally clean.

This means that the individual could be restored to his status as clean in one of two ways: either by becoming totally afflicted by the leprosy or by becoming totally unafflicted by any of the diseases of the skin. *What would otherwise have been regarded as total affliction became a means of judicial liberation*.

This points directly to Christ's suffering on the cross. He became totally afflicted, yet this led to his death, resurrection, and ascension, and it also led to the liberation of His people. Bearing the comprehensive judgment of God in his flesh, He liberated mankind. In a much more limited sense, the Israelite who bore the total affliction of leprosy in his own flesh liberated himself judicially from the penalty of exclusion from the city.

9. Samson Raphael Hirsch, *The Pentateuch*, trans. by Isaac Levy, 5 vols., 2nd ed. (Gateshead, London: Judaica Press, [1867–78] 1989), III, p. 331: Leviticus 13:2.

D. Mandatory Atonement

What must be stressed here is that this law was *not* based on considerations of public biological health; it was based on public judicial health. For the individual to be restored to full communion within the congregation, he had to make four of the five sacrifices of Leviticus: the burnt offering (14:13), the cereal offering (14:10), the sin offering (14:19), and the guilt offering (14:13). Only the voluntary peace offering was absent.[10]

1. Reparation and Adoption

The main problem here is to explain the guilt offering. The guilt offering was a reparation offering: the settling of a debt. Why did leprosy involve a debt to God? The commentators have trouble with this question.[11] I see the answer in the way in which this offering was to be administered: anointing the right ear lobe, the right thumb, and the right big toe with oil (v. 17). The boring of the man's ear to the doorpost was the bondservant's mark of his *voluntary adoption as a permanent household servant in another man's family* (Ex. 21:6; Deut. 15:17). The amputation of the right thumb and right big toe was *a mark of a defeated warrior* (Jud. 1:7), leaving him with reduced balance and with the greatly reduced ability to draw a bowstring. The person anointed with oil had his ear, thumb, and toe symbolically restored. *He re-entered the army of the Lord and could lawfully remain inside the camp of God's holy army*. Because he had been outside the camp, and therefore outside the priestly army of the Lord, he had to demonstrate that he was willing to pay a kind of priestly re-entrance fee—a fee analogous to the payments required of those who sought adoption into the family of Levi (Lev. 27:2–8).[12] The reparation offering constituted this payment. The alien seeking adoption had to be circumcised. Because this barrier did not exist for a formerly leprous Israelite, he was required to cross a different barrier.

2. Disinheritance

This indicates that these specified diseases were primarily regarded as judicial afflictions rather than biological afflictions. *They marked covenantal death: disinheritance*. Furthermore, the requirement that the individual be cast out of the congregation means that he

10. Wenham, *Leviticus*, pp. 209–10.
11. *Ibid*., p. 210.
12. Chapter 35.

would have to be forced outside the boundaries of any city. On the other hand, a diseased person who lived in a rural area (as did most of the inhabitants of Israel at the beginning) would not have to leave his home or his family. He was not eligible for the army, however, being excluded from Passover in Jerusalem and also from the holy camp during wartime, but he could remain in his home. He became the judicial equivalent of an uncircumcised resident alien: a stranger in his own land.

This law was a major threat to those residents who owned no land in Israel, or whose land had been leased to another family until the jubilee year. Such individuals had no legal claim to any place of residence. They could not enter a city during a time of a foreign invasion. Without lawful access to Passover, held in a holy place (the tabernacle or temple), they lost their citizenship. They became charity cases in need of mercy.

There was another resident of the city who, above all, would have been threatened by the laws governing plague and leprosy. This was the individual who had fled to a city refuge in order to escape the judgment of the blood avenger (kinsman redeemer) (Num. 35).[13] Only with the death of the high priest could he safely venture outside the city (Num. 35:28). Thus, for an individual who was residing in a city of refuge in order to escape death at the hands of a blood-avenger, exile from the city was the equivalent of a death sentence. Partial leprosy was one way that God could bring judgment to a man who had committed premeditated murder, but who had persuaded the judges in the city of refuge that the death of the other individual was an accident. God would merely have to bring the plague of partial leprosy on him, and the priest would require him to leave the protection of the city of refuge.

E. Legal Status, Not Medical Status

The text does not tell us that an individual afflicted by any of these diseases was inherently evil. There is no indication that he must have committed any kind of sin in order to be afflicted in such a way. The disease would come upon him at the discretion of God. The priest was not to inquire regarding a potential trespass on the individual's part. Nevertheless, in order for the individual to be restored after the disappearing of the disease, he did have to make a trespass offering

13. Gary North, *Sanctions and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Numbers*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [1997] 2012), ch. 21.

(sacrifice four) along with three other sacrifices. The priest in his capacity as a leprosy inspector was therefore neither a religious counselor nor a public health official in the modern sense, i.e., biological defense. He was the individual who *declared* a person legally clean or legally unclean. He declared a person's *judicial status* in the eyes of God. The individual who was declared unclean was then sent outside the city. He was required to tear his clothes, to leave his head bare, and to put a covering on his upper lip. He also had to cry "Unclean, unclean" (Lev. 13:45). The rending of one's garments was an indication of mourning (II Sam. 1:11).[14] Job's three friends came to mourn with him; they tore their garments in his presence (Job 2:12). When the person afflicted with leprosy tore his garment, he was testifying to his legal status, not his biological status. His legal status was reflected in his biological status, not the other way around. Leprosy was a sign, therefore, of *covenantal death*: the judicial status of a dead man, which authorized his legal and physical separation by an official, in this case a priest. "To live outside the camp was to be cut off from the blessings of the covenant."[15]

F. Economic Costs

From an economic standpoint, the most significant aspect of all of these laws is that neither the state nor the church was required by God to support the afflicted person financially. An individual could lose his house. Nevertheless, the state was not required to rebuild a new house for him. Similarly, an individual would lose his job, his place of residence, his access to the fellowship of the saints in corporate worship, and almost everything else that an urban resident would enjoy. Nevertheless, neither the state nor the ecclesiastical hierarchy was required to provide any kind of relief or other aid to this individual. This does not mean that voluntary charity was not appropriate. Obviously, it was very appropriate. Nevertheless, the state was not enjoined to compensate the individual for the losses that the individual would sustain. He sustained the losses, not because he was a biological threat to society, but because he was a judicial threat to society. He was a person whose legal status before God had changed. This change had manifested itself as a biological affliction: the mark of covenantal death.

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14. Wenham, *Leviticus*, p. 200. He cited Ezekiel 24:17, 22: covering the moustache while mourning for the dead.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 201.

1. Judicial Containment

No other diseases in the Bible came under the same exclusion rules. This indicates that these diseases were to be regarded as the direct hand of God against an individual. It was not assumed that an individual had caught the disease from another individual. It was not assumed that this individual could pass on the disease to another individual. It was assumed that if the priest, acting as a judicial agent of God, did not declare the individual unclean, and if the community did not take steps to remove the individual from the protection of the city, then God might allow the plague to spread. This spreading, again, was fundamentally judicial, not biological. This was true of plague in general in the Mosaic community. Plague was seen as a direct judgment of God against the people for their sins. That is to say, these public health measures were judicial measures.

The reason why we know this to be the case is that the individual who lived in the countryside was not under the same restraints. Because the individual's presence in the countryside was not a threat to his neighbors, there is reason to believe that the curse of God had something to do with the presence of the city. We may not be able to understand all of these ramifications. The point is, the individual was not quarantined inside the city; he was quarantined by removing him from within the city. The one exception to this was King Uzziah (II Chron. 26:21). He was forced to dwell in a separate house, and he was cut off for the rest of his life from the house of God. This judgment had come upon him immediately after his presumptuous sin of offering sacrifice in the temple. It was clear from this incident that the judgment was regarded as judicial—coming directly from the hand of God—and not biological. As the king, he was granted immunity from exclusion from David's city, but only by means of a boundary separating him from the city.

There is no question that quarantine was legal for those dwelling inside the cities of Israel. Men were cut off from their homes, their families, their livelihood, and especially from the household of faith. They could not participate in the covenant rituals and feasts of Israel. This was the ultimate civil quarantine in ancient Israel, other than execution. It meant excommunication from Passover and the loss of citizenship.

2. Quarantines Today

The question then arises: Is priestly quarantining biblically legitimate today? There is no indication that any of these named diseases

survived the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. There is also no indication that the laws of quarantine by a priest continue into the New Covenant. On the contrary, they could not have survived the demise of the priesthood. The quarantine laws were part of the Levitical laws of the Mosaic Covenant, and, I think, to some degree were connected to jubilee land laws of Leviticus 25. These laws all perished with the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. With the collapse of the judicial boundaries of the nation of Israel, there was a collapse of those ritual boundary laws that had governed the people of Israel even before they entered into the land of Canaan. There was no longer any tabernacle to be excluded from, and there was no unclean place outside either the camp or the city to which anyone could be banished. In other words, these laws related to plague, and plague in Mosaic Israel was judicial rather than biological.

In New Testament times, we can study biological afflictions as a separate class of phenomena, and we can also see them as the judgments of God. We do not have the ability to identify the specific sin, either corporate or personal, that leads to most sicknesses, with the exception of venereal diseases. Neither did the priest of the Mosaic Covenant in most cases. The priest was not asked to identify the sin that had led to the individual's affliction. The priest was required only to identify the affliction and deal with it judicially. We can therefore say that in New Testament times, afflictions of a biological nature can be dealt with either through medical techniques or by public health techniques. Contagious people can either be cured or they can be quarantined. The quarantining process, however, is based on considerations of the contagious nature of the disease, not the judicial status of the individual. Public health laws in the modern world are to be governed by statutes, and statutes must be predictable. Individuals must know in advance the penalties or sanctions that will be imposed for specific kinds of behavior. Thus, an individual who comes down with a disease cannot be said to be a threat to the community merely because he has come down with a disease. The judicial diseases of the Mosaic Covenant are no longer with us. Therefore, the diseases that afflict us today are like the common diseases that afflicted people inside and outside of Mosaic Israel. They are to be dealt with in similar ways: by medical care, by quarantine, by prayer, or by anointing by the elders (James 5:14).

3. To Protect the Public

The idea of quarantine in the 13th chapter of Leviticus is based on the need to protect the public. The spread of the disease, or other

forms of God's judgment, was to be halted by removing the afflicted individual from within the city. The concern was public health, but it was not a concern about biological contagion. It was concern about the willingness of God to afflict other individuals with the disease or other afflictions because of their unwillingness to enforce His law. Thus, the quarantining process of Leviticus 13 was primarily judicial. In fact, it would probably be safe to say that it was entirely judicial. Only by the extension of the principle of the protection of others within the city is it legitimate to classify today's diseases as being subject legally to the Bible's quarantining process.

Does this qualification alter the legal status of the civil government? For example, does this mean that in modern times the civil government is required to finance an individual who has been quarantined? The state has brought sanctions against him in the name of the health of the community. This was also the case in Mosaic Israel. The state has put him under quarantine because he is biologically contagious. This was not the case in the Mosaic Israel. Does the shift from judicial affliction to biological affliction change the legal requirements of the civil government? Does the change from the contagious legal status of the individual to his contagious biological status change the requirements of the civil government? In other words, do the quarantine laws of the civil government go through a fundamental transformation between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant?

It is part of English common law that when a city is on fire, the authorities have the right to knock down an individual's house in order to stop the spread of that fire. It is also part of common law that the city and the community do not owe anything to the individual who has had his house knocked down in this way. It is presumed that the fire would have destroyed the house anyway. It is also assumed that by destroying the individual's house, other houses within the community will be protected. This law was for generations basic to the protection of cities. If the fire-fighters had to worry about the cost of repayment each time they knocked down a house, it is unlikely that they would have had the same kind of incentive to knock down the houses. Obviously, if the price of an action goes up, less of it will be demanded. In this case, it means that the city would have been less likely to be protected from the "plague" of fire because of legal obligations to repay those people who were unfortunate enough to be caught in the line of fire, and whose houses, if knocked down,

would have allowed the creation of a fire break. It was assumed that the safety of the city was of greater importance than the loss to the individual. Because the house probably would have burned down anyway, it really was not a net loss to the owner.

Consider a contemporary individual who has contracted a contagious disease. He has become a threat to the community. If the community is required by law to finance this individual until such time as he recovers biologically from the disease, it is less likely that the community will take the necessary steps to isolate him. Common law therefore does not require the civil government to compensate the quarantined individual. Neither does biblical law. This is why quarantine is a devastating event in the life of the individual. Historically, quarantined people have not been permitted to leave their homes. Others have not been able to come into those homes without falling under the ban. While it is assumed that charity will be forthcoming to help the quarantined individual in his time of need, it has been assumed until very recently that the state has no legal obligation to support that person during the period of his confinement. To do so would raise the cost of confining individuals, and it would therefore lead to an unwillingness on the part of public health officials to confine them. This would increase the risk of contagion and disease in the community.

The contagious nature of the disease, in effect, is a form of violence. It is violence conducted by a third party, namely, the biological organisms that transmit the disease, but it is still a form of violence. The carrier places other people at risk. Thus, common law determined that an individual who becomes a threat to the community must be removed from the community so as to reduce the likelihood of this indirect form of violence. Public health measures are directed against the disease primarily and against its carriers secondarily.

G. Civil Authority

There can be little doubt that the priest in this instance did possess civil authority. He could declare a person judicially unclean. Because God threatened the whole community with judgment, the state was required to enforce the decision of the priest. Because he was entrusted with the legal authority to act as God's agent in this case, his word had to be obeyed. There are few other cases of similar priestly power in the Old Covenant. This indicates that there was something other than public health considerations involved in this form of lep-

rosy. There was a *special judicial condition* that the word of a public health official could not deal with successfully. Yet a transgression of these boundaries was a real threat to the community, which is why the civil power of the city was invoked.

That no similar provision exists in the New Covenant era indicates that this plague was not biological but judicial. The special boundary condition of the nation of Israel ended with the fall of Jerusalem. When the walls of the temple were torn down, the judicial boundaries of the cities of Israel lost their special status. With the end of the Mosaic priesthood, the urban quarantine laws of the Mosaic Covenant ceased. Had the laws been directed against an essentially biological threat to the health of the community, there is no reason why the local civil magistrate could not have assumed the priest's policing function. But with the rending of the curtain of the temple at the death of Christ (Matt. 27:51), the need for a physical barrier between God and man ceased except insofar as the elements of the sacraments are physical. The judicial barrier still exists, but legal access to the presence of God is now exclusively sacramental. The priesthood of all believers is a judicial reality. The state no longer has any valid legal authority to enforce any aspect of the now-annulled distinction between clean and unclean—a distinction that was judicial rather than biological. The Levitical quarantine laws were finally annulled at the same time, and for the same reason, that the Mosaic dietary laws were annulled: A.D. 70.

The boundary laws of clean and unclean were based on the physical holiness of God's dwelling place. The Ark of the Covenant was physically set apart in the holy of holies, His place of residence. He was unwilling to remain with His people if they transgressed certain physical boundaries, since these boundaries were representative of His covenantal authority over them. The concentric boundary rings around the Ark represented God's hierarchy of authority: the closer that a person was allowed to come to the Ark of the Covenant, the higher his judicial authority. This is why the high priest possessed greater authority than the king, and therefore also greater responsibility.[16] These concentric geographical boundaries ceased to exist at the crucifixion of Christ when the veil of the temple was torn. God departed from Israel definitively (judicially) at the crucifixion; He departed progressively (culturally and politically) over the next generation (the Book of Acts); He departed finally in A.D. 70. God would

16. Chapter 4.

no longer dwell in the temple. All other holiness boundaries in Israel therefore ceased. They no longer served any judicial purpose. This included the judicial boundaries of clean and unclean (Acts 10).

The plagues of the New Covenant era are communicated biologically, not judicially. Plagues can no longer be stopped by a priest who takes immediate defensive action and skewers a pair of mixed-covenant fornicators with his spear (Num. 25:6–8).[17]

Conclusion

Wenham summarized the Levitical laws of quarantine. He correctly related them to the Levitical holiness laws.

> It seems likely that even in OT times "skin diseases" and their treatment were regarded as symbolic of sin and its consequences. When a man was afflicted with a disfiguring skin disease he did visibly "fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23), the glory that he had been given in his creation (Ps. 8:6 [Eng. 5]). His banishment from human society and God's sanctuary was a reenactment of the fall, when Adam and Eve were expelled from Eden (Gen. 3). The infection of garments and houses with "skin disease" served as a reminder of the interaction of man and his environment. . . . The laws of Leviticus were not abrogated by Jesus; in fact he tells the healed "lepers" to observe them (Matt. 8:4; Luke 17:14). But the new era of salvation made obsolete the idea that the diseased should be banished from human and divine society. Jesus' ministry and that of his disciples (Matt. 10:8) was one which brought reconciliation between God and man. Therefore the old laws isolating men because of their unsightly appearance had become inappropriate and out of date. Like the rules about unclean animals, they did not fit in with the new program, which was to climax in the creation of a new heaven and a new earth, in which men of every class and nation would be redeemed (Rev. 7:9).[18]

The quarantine laws of Leviticus had more to do with *quarantining the people from the presence of God* than they did with quarantining sick people from healthy people. The blemished person had to be kept away from God's presence in the temple. The laws of leprosy were related to the temple's laws of purity far more than they were to modern public health laws. This is why any conclusions that we attempt to draw from these laws must be done by analogy, not directly.

What can we say with confidence? First, the civil government did possess lawful authority to enforce a priest's decision to remove people from their homes in order to protect others in the community from

17. This act had been authorized by Moses, as the supreme civil ruler (Num. 25:5).
18. Wenham, *Leviticus*, pp. 213, 214.

the judgment of God. This judgment came in the form of plague. The contagion was judicial, but the threat did exist.

Second, the priest possessed the civil authority to remove houses and people from a city. His judicial declaration as an ecclesiastical agent had to be enforced by the civil magistrate.

Third, the victim of the plague had to bear the expenses associated with the results of the quarantine. Because there was no command in the Old Testament that the state support quarantined individuals, it is not possible to derive from this law any biblical injunction for state welfare programs. The only legitimate conclusion to draw from this law by analogy is that there is no state welfare function. The job of the civil government is to protect people from violence, not support people who have been afflicted, either naturally or judicially. To argue any other way is to make the state into an agency of healing rather than an agency of protection. The state is an agency that is supposed to bring negative sanctions against evil-doers. *There is no biblical warrant for the concept of the state as a healer*. The job of the state is to prohibit behavior that threatens other individuals physically. If this threatening behavior is breathing upon others, then the state must see to it that the individuals who are a threat to others are not put into close contact with those who might be injured as a result.

If the state in the Mosaic Covenant was not told by God to support those who fell victim to diseases that mandated quarantine, then there is no biblical case for the state as an agency of tax-financed healing today. If the victim of leprosy in the Mosaic Covenant was forced out of his home by the state, and made to wander outside the city, and still the state was not responsible for his financial support, then the case for modern socialized medicine cannot be based on any biblical text.[19] It must be based on the argument from silence. It must be based on the conclusion that there has been a fundamental change in the function of civil government in the New Testament: from protector (Old Covenant) to healer. We have yet to see the exegetical case for such a change. While the presuppositions of the modern political order favor such a view of the state—as did the presuppositions of the ancient pagan world—humanist presuppositions are not a valid substitute for biblical exegesis.

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19. When I raised this argument in my debate with Ron Sider in the spring of 1981 at Gordon-Conwell Seminary, his rhetorical response was clever. He cried, "Unclean, unclean!" He then admitted that he had never heard anything like this before. But he made no attempt to answer my argument exegetically.

INTRODUCTION TO PART III: SEPARATION (LEV. 7–22)

> *Therefore shall ye keep my commandments, and do them: I am the* Lord*. Neither shall ye profane my holy name; but I will be hallowed among the children of Israel: I am the* Lord *which hallow you, That brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: I am the* Lord.
>
> LEVITICUS 22:31–33

Separation: this is the heart of the Book of Leviticus, the third book of the Pentateuch. The biblical meaning of *holiness* is to be *set apart* by God, i.e., *hallowed*. Separation and holiness are inescapably linked; or, we might say, inescapably *bound*. Leviticus 17–22 presents the laws of separation.

Leviticus 22:31 speaks of profaning God's name in relation to obeying the commandments. This points back to the third commandment, which prohibits the taking of God's name in vain (Ex. 20:7). God places a boundary around His name; to violate this boundary is to profane it. That this law is recapitulated in a passage mandating obedience to God's commandments should not be surprising. Point three of the biblical covenant model, ethics, is related to the third commandment. It is also related to the eighth commandment, "thou shalt not steal" (Ex. 20:15), the Bible's supreme affirmation of the rights of private property, i.e., the right of individuals to own, use, and sell (disown) property.[1]

The separation described in Leviticus is multifaceted. Separation was judicial: sacred, common, and profane. It was geographical: the holy of holies in relation to the temple; the temple area in relation to the rest of the nation; each tribe of Israel in relation to the other

1. Gary North, *Authority and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Exodus* (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, 2012), Part 2, *Decalogue and Dominion* (1986), ch. 28.

tribes; walled cities in relation to the countryside; the very land of Israel in relation to the land outside the boundaries. Tribal separation was in turn prophetic, relating to the promised Seed (Gen. 3:15; 49:10). Separation was priestly: Aaron and Levi; Levi and the other tribes; Israel and the nations. Separation was chronological: the three mandatory yearly feasts, the sabbatical year, and the jubilee year. It was biological: breed vs. breed. It was dietary: clean and unclean. It was physical: clean and unclean. It was ritual: clean and unclean. It was economic: rich and poor. It was political: citizen and non-citizen. It was above all ethical: good and evil.

It is in these chapters that the hermeneutical problem with Leviticus—and with the Mosaic covenant generally—presses the commentator. Which of these laws were cross-boundary laws? Which ones applied both inside and outside the nation of Israel? The geographically cross-boundary laws were universal moral laws, and as such, their binding character has crossed over into the New Covenant. To use a New Covenant metaphor, these laws were resurrected with Jesus.

10

THE PROMISED LAND AS A COVENANTAL AGENT

Defile not ye yourselves in any of these things: for in all these the nations are defiled which I cast out before you: And the land is defiled: therefore I do visit the iniquity thereof upon it, and the land itself vomiteth out her inhabitants. Ye shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgments, and shall not commit any of these abominations; neither any of your own nation, nor any stranger that sojourneth among you: (For all these abominations have the men of the land done, which were before you, and the land is defiled;) That the land spue not you out also, when ye defile it, as it spued out the nations that were before you. For whosoever shall commit any of these abominations, even the souls that commit them shall be cut off from among their people.

LEVITICUS 18:24–29

The theocentric meaning of this passage is that God is the Lord of history. He brings judgments in terms of His covenantal law. History is theocentric. It is therefore to be understood in terms of the covenant.

God, the supreme authority of the covenant (point one), possesses the power to impose sanctions directly (point four), but He usually chooses to use agents in this task (point two). In this passage, He uses an agent to separate covenant-breakers from the society of covenant-keepers (point three).

A. Geography and Obedience

Leviticus 18, more than any other chapter in the Bible, connects a society's obedience to biblical law and its geography. This chapter describes the land as vomiting out those who disobey God's laws: separation. This graphic metaphor is that of a geographic area that literally forces out of its presence all those who disobey these laws.

The vomiting land of Canaan is one of the most peculiar meta-

phors in the Bible. Bible commentators do not go into detail on just why it was that the land should be described here as vomiting people from its midst. The reason for the commentators' silence is that they have not recognized that this language is more than metaphorical; it is covenantal. It has to do with a system of boundaries and oaths. The land of Canaan was a covenantal subordinate in a hierarchical system of authority, just as the whole earth has been since the creation of Adam. This language is therefore *judgmental*. It describes a unique hierarchical-judicial relation among God, the land of Israel, and those who lived inside the land's boundaries. The pre-Fall hierarchical relationship—God > covenant-keeping man > nature—has been distorted because of sin, although the hierarchical requirement remains the same. The earth brings forth thorns and weeds to thwart mankind; the land of Israel vomited out its inhabitants.

B. The Promised Land as the Enforcer

Israelites were warned to obey God's laws, "That the land spue not you out also, when ye defile it, as it spued out the nations that were before you." The land is described as serving as *God's sanctioning agent*. Like the hornets that went before the Israelites as they removed the Canaanites (Ex. 23:28), so would the land spew them out if they committed the same sorts of sins that the Canaanites had committed. Historically, the Assyrians and Babylonians spewed them out of the land under the Mosaic Covenant. Yet the land was spoken of as the covenantal agent in the Mosaic Covenant, while the ascended Jesus is spoken of as the agent of spewing in the New Covenant: "So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth" (Rev. 3:16). The language is both covenantal and symbolic in each case. The land did not have a literal stomach and a literal gullet. Jesus does not literally spew out churches. Yet the language of vomiting is used in both cases. The imagery of vomiting is appropriately disgusting, and it is used throughout the Scriptures to describe sin and its consequences.

> He hath swallowed down riches, and he shall vomit them up again: God shall cast them out of his belly (Job 20:15).

> The morsel which thou hast eaten shalt thou vomit up, and lose thy sweet words (Prov. 23:8).

> As a dog returneth to his vomit, so a fool returneth to his folly (Prov. 26:11).

> The Lord hath mingled a perverse spirit in the midst thereof: and they have caused Egypt to err in every work thereof, as a drunken man staggereth in his vomit (Isa. 19:14).
>
> For all tables are full of vomit and filthiness, so that there is no place clean (Isa. 28:8).
>
> Make ye him drunken: for he magnified himself against the Lord: Moab also shall wallow in his vomit, and he also shall be in derision (Jer. 48:26).
>
> But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire (II Peter 2:22).

This imagery is that of a man who has eaten something that he should have avoided, and his stomach rebels. This unpleasant event is supposed to remind him: don't eat this again. The metaphor's message: "Go and sin no more." Israel never learned this lesson. Israel went and sinned a lot more.

The imagery of the land's vomiting is closely connected to the Mosaic dietary laws, as we shall see. When those dietary laws ceased to have any covenantal relevance—definitively in Acts 10; finally in A.D. 70—the Promised Land ceased to perform this covenantal task. No other land replaced the Promised Land.

1. Special Promise, Special Claim

The strategic reality of the symbolism (rhetoric)[1] of the land's spewing out the Canaanites was that *Israel possessed a unique legal claim on the land as a result of God's promise to Abraham*. Israel was authorized by God to commit genocide, or mandate total expulsion, against the land's existing inhabitants. God brings negative sanctions in history. He did so with the firstborn of Egypt, and again when Egypt's army perished in the Red Sea. He had shown no mercy to those who rebelled against Him. He would tolerate no mercy on the part of the Israelites against the inhabitants of Canaan. "And thou shalt consume all the people which the Lord thy God shall deliver thee; thine eye shall have no pity upon them: neither shalt thou serve their gods; for that will be a snare unto thee" (Deut. 7:16). Why no pity? Because of the abomination of their gods. God's warning: similar worship inside the land will bring

1. Rhetoric is used as a means of persuasion. It is the third biblical interpretive principle: grammar (grammatico-historical), (theo)logic, and rhetoric (symbolism). The medieval educational Trivium was a manifestation of this three-fold system of biblical hermeneutics.

similar military sanctions (Deut. 8:19–20).[2] God subsequently raised up Assyria and Babylon to perform an analogous service for Him, which is why this passage warned of a future spewing forth.

The land specified as God's agent was the Promised Land, not Egypt or any other plot of ground. Only the land inside *God's covenantal boundary of separation served as His agent of negative military sanctions*. This leads us to a conclusion: because the Promised Land could serve as a prosecuting witness against Israel, it was unique. The witness for the prosecution is required to cast the first stone (Deut. 17:7). The earthquake is the obvious example of stone-casting by the land (Isa. 29:6; Zech. 14:5). "The earth shall quake before them; the heavens shall tremble: the sun and the moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining" (Joel 2:10). "The mountains quake at him, and the hills melt, and the earth is burned at his presence, yea, the world, and all that dwell therein" (Nahum 1:5). This quaking is the language of covenantal judgment. Israel's covenantal agent, Moses, had already experienced this. "And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly" (Ex. 19:18). It took place again at the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. "And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent" (Matt. 27:51). Conclusion: If the land's office as *witness for the prosecution* still exists, then its office as *stone-caster* still exists. Because the resurrected Christ appears as the vomiter in New Covenant imagery, I conclude that He is the witness who brings judgment against societies. His agency of sanctions today is social and biological rather than geological.

What about this prophecy in the Book of Revelation? "And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb" (Rev. 6:15–16). The reason such language applied to that event is because the prophecy was intended to be fulfilled a few years after it was written. This prophecy of looming covenantal judgment was fulfilled in A.D. 70: the fall of Jerusalem.[3]

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2. Gary North, *Inheritance and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Deuteronomy*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [1999] 2012), ch. 23.

3. David Chilton, *The Days of Vengeance: An Exposition of the Book of Revelation* (Ft.

2. Military Sanctions

The Mosaic Covenant's symbolic use of the land as God's agent of negative sanctions represented military conquest: Israel vs. the Canaanites, Moab vs. Israel (Jud. 3), Canaan vs. Israel (Jud. 4), Midian vs. Israel (Jud. 6), Phoenicia and Ammon vs. Israel (Jud. 10; 13), Syria vs. Israel (II Kings 5:2). In the cases of Assyria vs. Israel and Babylon vs. Judah, the Israelites were actually removed from the land. If someone should argue that the New Covenant has transferred to the earth in general the symbolic authority to serve as an agent bringing negative sanctions, meaning that God still raises up nations to bring military sanctions against His people, he must also insist that genocide is still authorized by God as the mandatory strategy of covenantal conquest by His people. But genocide is not the way of the gospel; persuasion, not military conquest, is its means of evangelism. Conclusion: the land no longer serves as a covenantal agent under the New Covenant except in the general Adamic sense (Gen. 3:17–19).[4] That is, the s*ymbolism* of the land as God's covenantal agent is no longer valid; *the arena of covenantal conflict is no longer the military battlefield*.

Similarly, if land marked off by a New Covenant-bound nation still possesses this Mosaic judicial authority, then the Abrahamic promise regarding the land must somehow extend into the New Covenant. If so, then so do the dietary laws. Contemporary British Israelites may choose to believe this regarding the dietary laws, but the church historically has emphatically dismissed all such suggestions. Conclusion: the land no longer serves as a covenantal agent under the New Covenant. One sign of this alteration is the New Testament's annulment of the Levitical dietary laws and its substitution of a new form of dietary law: the Lord's Supper.[5]

With the abolition of the unique covenantal status of Old Covenant Israel, God ceased to speak of the Promised Land as His covenantal agent. Remember, it did not act as a covenantal agent until

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Worth, Texas: Dominion Press, 1987), pp. 196–97.

4. Gary North, *Sovereignty and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Genesis* (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [1982] 2012), ch. 12.

5. I suggest that there will be a tendency for those who hold that the Mosaic dietary laws still are judicially binding to search for evidence that there was an increase in the frequency of earthquakes in the morally rebellious modern world. Rushdoony, for example, regarded as judicially significant the escalation of reported earthquakes, 1950–1963: 10 instances, compared to eight, 1900–49. R. J. Rushdoony, *The Biblical Philosophy of History* (Vallecito, California: Ross House, [1969] 2000), p. 60. This was in the late 1960s, while he was writing *The Institutes of Biblical Law*, that he first decided that the Mosaic dietary laws are still binding.

the Israelites crossed into the land from the wilderness. Egypt had not spewed out God's enemies. The idea that the land is in some way the bringer of God's military sanctions against covenant-breakers was valid only under the Mosaic Covenant, and only within the boundaries of national Israel.

C. Law and Life in the Promised Land

The issue was ethics, point three of the biblical covenant model. The focus was geography: the Promised Land.

> Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, I am the LORD your God. After the doings of the land of Egypt, wherein ye dwelt, shall ye not do: and after the doings of the land of Canaan, whither I bring you, shall ye not do: neither shall ye walk in their ordinances. Ye shall do my judgments, and keep mine ordinances, to walk therein: I am the LORD your God. Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments: which if a man do, he shall live in them: I am the LORD (Lev. 18:2–5).

The laws that God's people must follow should not be the laws of either Egypt or Canaan. While the text does not specifically mention it, it is clear that *God's historical sanctions were involved*. The Israelites had already seen the sanctions that God had brought against Egypt. First, there were plagues inside the land. Second, the Egyptians had given precious gems and precious metals to the fleeing Israelites. Third, the Israelites had been expelled from Egypt as God's means for providing deliverance and liberation. The Egyptians lost their slave labor force. Similarly, God tells them in this chapter that there will be comprehensive negative sanctions imposed against those who pres-ently dwell in the land of Canaan. The Canaanites will someday be vomited out by the land, i.e., by the invading Israelites. The imagery of *vomiting out* symbolized a military phenomenon—*invasion of the land*—and the cultural phenomenon of *replacement by a new nation*. The operational factor here was ethics. God promised them that when they entered the land and established residence, the plagues of Egypt would be removed from the land, *if* they remained covenantally faithful (Deut. 7:15). The God of *liberation* they understood as the God who brings *positive and negative sanctions in history*. What is unique about this chapter is that the land itself is described as imposing negative sanctions against law-breakers. The Promised Land would become God's covenantal agent after they invaded Canaan.

In verse five, long life and the law are linked. The text does not

specifically use the word *abundant*, but this is the implication of the passage. The individual who obeys God's law is the individual who receives life, meaning abundant life. This does not refer to eternal life; it refers to *life in history*. The passage does not teach eternal salvation by man's own works, but it does teach that God brings positive sanctions in history to those who consistently obey His revealed word. The issue raised by this passage is this: *how to preserve abundant life in the abundant new land* (see also Deuteronomy 8). The Canaanites had not obeyed God; therefore, they were no longer going to be allowed to live in the land. Their abundant inheritance would be transferred to the invaders, as had been promised to Abraham. But the Israelites were warned that if they disobeyed God's law in the future, they would also be removed from residence in the land.

The Promised Land was going to become the arena of covenantal conflict when the Israelites entered the land. It was not yet such an arena when Moses delivered the law to Israel. It had not yet vomited the residents out of its presence. In this sense, the Canaanites were analogous to the furniture inside a house that had been infected with biblical leprosy. The furniture and everything inside did not become judicially unclean until the priest entered it (Lev. 14:36).[6] The people of Israel were the priests of the ancient world.[7] When they entered the land of Canaan, their presence would bring everything inside the land into a condition of legal uncleanness.[8] The land was defiled because of the sins of the Canaanites, but the priests had not yet entered it. When the conquest began, the invasion would judicially identify the land as polluted. When the people of Israel penetrated the boundary of the land, they brought both it and the Canaanites under the judicial sanctions of God. These sanctions would remain as a judicial threat to the land and its inhabitants for as long as the Israelites retained their priestly relationship with God. Do not commit such sins, they were warned, "That the land spue not you out also, when ye defile it, as it spued out the nations that were before you" (Lev. 18:28).

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6. Chapter 9.

7. James B. Jordan, *The Sociology of the Church: Essays in Reconstruction* (Tyler, Texas: Geneva Ministries, 1986), pp. 101–2.

8. This could take place only after they were circumcised (Josh. 5): a mark of Israel's priestly judicial status.

D. The Land as a Surrogate for Man

The land of Canaan was analogous to both God and man in two senses. First, the land was omniscient within its boundaries. It saw every act of rebellion, even inside the family. Second, for everyone inside the land, the land was omnipresent. There was nowhere that someone could go within the land in which he would not be under the threat of the sanctions imposed by the land. Obviously, God is the viewing agent, but the language of the text drives home the point: no more could the nation of Israel escape being seen and judged by God in history than a man can escape standing on the ground beneath his feet.

Because the land of Canaan is described here as being under God's sanctions, it was also analogous to man. The land had refused to obey God. It had not yet brought a covenant lawsuit against transgressors within its boundaries. The land therefore was about to come under judgment. "And the land is defiled: therefore I do visit the iniquity thereof upon it, and the land itself vomiteth out her inhabitants" (Lev. 18:25). When the land comes under judgment, the text says, it will then act under this pressure to enforce the law of God. It will vomit evildoers out of its presence.

The sanctions of God would be directed against the defilement of the land. First, the resident nations would be cast out by God (v. 24). This would be a corporate sanction against them. Second, the land itself would be punished (v. 25). This also was a collective sanction. When the people of Israel entered the land, these same collective sanctions would be imposed *by God and by the land* in order to avoid the defilement of the land.

The text does not say that the sanctions would be imposed to prevent the defilement of the *people* who live in the land; they would be imposed in order to avoid the *defilement of the land itself*. This indicates that the land was legally represented in some way by those who dwelt in the land. When they acted in an evil manner, the land itself was legally defiled. This is an extension of the principle which we find in Genesis 3:17–19. Adam sinned, and the land came under a curse. *Adam represented the land in God's court, and by violating God's law, he brought the land under a curse*.

We therefore need to understand the biblical doctrine of representation. There is a hierarchical relationship that links God to man and man's environment. When Adam rebelled against God, he disrupted this cosmic hierarchy. Adam defiled the land because he himself be-

came judicially unclean. Sin inverts the hierarchy between God and man. Originally, man was given dominion over nature. When Satan rebelled against God by using the creation (the serpent and Adam and Eve), he brought God's curse against the serpent and Adam and Eve. When man rebelled against God by using nature as his instrument (the forbidden tree), he brought God's curse against nature, and therefore against him, for nature was his resource. Nature therefore became God's implement of cursing against mankind. God did to man what man had attempted to do to Him: use nature as a weapon. Nature in this sense was used as a rod of wrath.

E. Theocratic Order in the Promised Land

All the residents in the land were under God's laws (v. 26). The civil covenant required that the state bring sanctions against the violators: cutting them off (v. 29). This was a form of covenantal death. God issued a divorce decree against the persons who committed the prohibited act. There had to be a public announcement of this divorce by church, state, and family.

1. Judicial Separation

The individual lost his membership in the fellowship of the saints. In modern terms, he was *excommunicated*. He lost his civil citizenship as well. Finally, he lost his position as a family member, which means he would lose his legal inheritance in the land. Under the old covenant, the jubilee land laws required that he be cut out of the right of reversion of his father's land during the jubilee year.[9] (Under the New Testament, this would no longer be the case, since the jubilee land laws no longer apply.) The head of the household was required by God to disinherit the individual who had transgressed any of these laws.

What about the foreigner? The foreigner was not officially married to God. He could not be excommunicated from the fellowship of the saints, since he did not belong to the fellowship of the saints. Yet negative sanctions warned him not to violate the laws governing marriage and sexual contact (Lev. 18:6–23). Violators would be expelled physically from the nation. There can be no other meaning of the phrase, "cut off."

What about the resident alien? At the first infraction, he would have had his status shifted to that of foreigner. He would no longer

9. Gary North, *Authority and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Exodus* (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, 2012) Part 3, *Tools of Dominion* (1990), ch. 54:E:2.

have been under the same degree of protection by civil law that other resident aliens enjoyed. What were these protections? They were treated as Israelites except in two respects: (1) they could not hold the office of civil magistrate; (2) they could not inherit rural land. They were not allowed to bring negative civil sanctions against Israelites, since a resident alien was not formally covenanted to the Old Covenant church. The resident alien was not under God's ecclesiastical sanctions, so he was not legally entitled to bring God's negative civil sanctions in the holy commonwealth.[10] Because he could not inherit rural land, he could not become a freeman. The threat of permanent slavery would always face him (Lev. 25:44–45).[11]

In all other respects, the resident alien was entitled to the same benefits that an Israelite was. When an Israelite fell into poverty, and approached one of his brothers for a zero-interest loan, the brother was not to be hard-hearted against him (Deut. 15:7–10). When the resident alien fell into poverty and sought a charitable loan from an Israelite, the resident alien also had a moral claim on the loan (Lev. 25:35–37).[12] The foreigner who had no stake in the land did not possess such a claim. Second, the Israelite lender could extract usury from the foreigner (Deut. 23:20),[13] which he was not allowed to collect from a poverty-stricken fellow member of the covenant or from a resident alien (Lev. 25:35b–36).[14] The foreigner did not benefit from the year of release for charity debts (Deut. 15:3).[15] The resident alien did. His permanent presence in the land gave him special immunities and benefits. He was not of the covenant judicially, but he was inside the boundaries of the land of the covenant as a permanent resident.

2. The Land and Sanctions

Because the threat of God's divorce stood against the transgressors, the text speaks of the land as divorcing them. *The Promised Land is described here as a covenantal agent of God*. The land would cast out the nations of Canaan. In contrast, the land of Egypt had not cast out the Egyptians. This points to the unique judicial position of the Promised Land: first, because of the promise to Abraham; second, as

10. Gary North, *Political Polytheism: The Myth of Pluralism* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1989), ch. 2.

11. Chapter 30.

12. Chapter 28.

13. North, *Inheritance and Dominion*, ch. 55.

14. North, *Authority and Dominion*, ch. 49:C.

15. North, *Inheritance and Dominion*, ch. 36.

the homeland of the Israelites. Only those residents who lived in the Promised Land would come under the sanctions of the land.[16] The land was a place of *sanctions*. It therefore was a *sanctuary*—a sanctified place, a *judicially set-apart place*. It had been established by God as a special dwelling place for His people. It had specific boundaries. It was holy (set-apart) ground because it was the special dwelling place of God. It was the dwelling place of the saints (those sanctified by God) because they dwelt spiritually with God. The land was uniquely guarded by God, so that during the three annual festivals when the men journeyed to Jerusalem, God removed covetousness from the enemies of Israel (Ex. 34:24).

The land is said here to be under God's sanctions. This means that the Promised Land was a *represented* agent. The archetype here is the curse of the ground in Genesis 3:17–19. The creation still groans in expectation of the final judgment and full restoration (Rom. 8:22).[17] Furthermore, the land of Canaan was entitled to a sabbath rest every seventh year (Lev. 25:1–7).[18] When the people of Israel came into the land, they failed to give the land its rest (II Chron. 36:21). When it was represented unrighteously, it suffered.

The land was also to be punished by God as a *representing* agent. Earlier, the dual witness of the land and the shed blood of the innocent had brought a covenant lawsuit against the guilty party. Cain was punished by the ground (Gen. 4:9–12). We are told that he was driven from the face of God and also from the face of the ground (Gen 4:14). The "face of the ground" must have referred to the land in the immediate proximity of the garden: holy ground. (Obviously, we can never escape the face of the physical ground unless we reside off the planet.) The closer that Cain came to the garden, the closer he came to the place of God's judgment. Thus, he was driven from the place of God's earthly residence and judgment—in one sense a curse (not being close to God), but in another sense a blessing (not being subject to immediate execution, thereby giving him time to repent).

This equating of the *face of God* and the *face of the land* is important for understanding the covenant nature of the Promised Land. The land was punished for its failure to bring this covenant lawsuit against the Canaanites. This is peculiar language, but it is basic to

16. Those Israelites who journeyed outside the land had to return annually to Israel, so they were brought under dual sanctions: Passover and land.

17. Gary North, *Cooperation and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Romans*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2001] 2012), ch. 6.

18. Chapter 23.

understanding the nature of the threat against those who would subsequently violate God's law within the confines of the land. God regarded the Promised Land as His agent. The land therefore responds as the Israelites approach it in judgment. The Canaanites are driven out when the Israelites cross its boundaries. The text says, first, that God expels them (v. 24); it also says that the land expels them (vv. 25, 28). This language is reminiscent of the prophecy in Exodus 23:28: "And I will send hornets before thee, which shall drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite, from before thee." God and nature cooperate in the expulsion of the Canaanites. As in the case of the face of God and the face of the land, the expulsion of the Canaanites is discussed both as an *act of God* and as an *act of the land*.

The Egyptians had not been driven out of Egypt. Why not? Because Egypt was not holy ground. It was not a permanent sanctuary, although it was repeatedly to play the role of a temporary sanctuary for Israel, culminating in its service as a sanctuary for Jesus and His family in Herod's day (Matt. 2:13–15). Because the land of Canaan had been set apart by God's promise to Abraham, it drove out those who violated the judicial terms of the covenant, once the time came for God to fulfill His promise. The Canaanites as a civilization were driven out of the land during the conquest. When Israel came into the land, the vomiting process began: *conquest = spewing*. Centuries later, both Israel and Judah were driven out by God during the exile.

F. Strangers in the Land

During the post-exilic era, the same degree of civic evil in the land did not defile the land in equal measure as it had before the exile. There are several reasons for this. Most important, *the exile marked the end of the Davidic theocracy*. Kingship was never again restored politically inside the boundaries of Israel. The highest civil appeals court lay outside the boundaries of the land. The post-exilic period was the era of the empires: Medo-Persia, Macedonia, and Rome. Cyrus of Persia was God's designated anointed agent (Isa. 45:1). This transfer of kingship beyond the land's boundaries led to a fundamental judicial change inside the land. Resident aliens could now inherit rural land permanently (Ezek. 47:23). Also, Greek and then Roman troops remained in the land. The Samaritans, brought in by the Assyrians after the Northern Kingdom fell, remained as permanent residents within the original geographical boundaries of Israel, accepting a deviant theology that was loosely related to authorized worship (John 4:19–25).

1. The Temple's Centrality

The central judicial manifestation of the sanctuary status of the Promised Land was the temple. There was a *judicial centrality* of worship in the post-exilic era that was even greater than during the pre-exilic era. The Israelites never again indulged themselves in the worship of the gods of Canaan. The purity of the temple, the sacrificial system, and the national synagogue system was primary. *The land is no longer said to be a covenantal agent after the exile*. It did become a covenantal threat one last time in A.D. 70, but this was after the establishment of the New Covenant. The fall of Jerusalem marked the transfer of the kingdom of God to the church (Matt. 21:43): the final annulment of the Promised Land's covenantal status. There were strangers in the land after the Babylonian exile, and these strangers exercised lawful civil authority, but this no longer threatened the sanctuary status of the nation. What would threaten it was the presence of strangers in the temple.

The metaphor of vomiting symbolized a successful military invasion of the land and its subsequent conquest. After the exile, God's people were no longer sovereign over civil affairs in the land. The threat of invasion by a strange nation was no longer a covenantal threat to Israel's civil order, which was not governed by God's covenantal hierarchy. In this sense, a boundary violation of Israel's borders was no longer a major theological problem. Being vomited out of the land was no longer a covenantal threat, except in response to their unsuccessful rebellion against pagan civil authorities who were already in the land.

When Antiochus began to persecute the Jews in the second century B.C., he did so by God's sovereignty as the agent who imposed negative sanctions. There had been covenantal rebellion in the land. This rebellion was initiated by Jews who broke the covenant with God and attempted to covenant the nation with Hellenism and the Greeks. A foreign athletic hall was built in Jerusalem. Circumcision ceased (I Macc. 1:11–15). It was only then that the persecution by Antiochus began. First, he subdued Egypt; then he returned to conquer Israel. He established false worship in the temple (I Macc. 1:54–55). Again, the threat was to the temple, not to Israel's civil order. Their repeated rebellions had broken the terms of the Mosaic civil covenant so thoroughly that God no longer trusted them to administer the civil covenant inside the boundaries of the land. This was a curse against them, as it is in every biblically covenanted social order.

2. The Church as the New Temple

In the New Testament, the church replaced the old temple order. Local churches also replaced the local synagogue order. There is a new Bride for God. There must therefore be a new form of covenantal divorce. Christ is said to spew lukewarm churches out of His mouth (Rev. 3:16). There must be no mixing of God's old and new brides. We know this because we know that *God is not a polygamist*. The Jews understood this, which is why they persecuted the church in Jerusalem, Israel, and in all the cities in which the synagogues had been built outside of Israel. The church left Jerusalem in 69 A.D., just prior to the invasion of the land and the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus.[19] This was the exodus event of the New Covenant order.

The rebellion against Rome by the Jews led to the scattering of the Jews: the diaspora. First, it led to the 70 A.D. invasion of the temple by gentiles, followed immediately by its destruction. This led to the triumph of the Pharisees over the Sadducees, who had been the dominant influence in the temple.[20] Second, six decades later, another revolt led by Bar Kochba resulted in the second wave out of the land. After the defeat of this rebellion in 135, the Romans forced most of the Jews out of the land of Palestine, but by this late date, the land possessed no covenantal status.

The Jews did not believe this regarding the land. After they were expelled from the land by the Romans, they believed that they had to restructure Judaic law. They could lawfully receive the laying on of hands (*semikah*) only inside the land. Because this was no longer possible, they believed that they could no longer impose the Mosaic law's sanctions to settle their disputes. They believed that they had lost the judicial anointing that had allowed them to impose such sanctions. Jewish legal scholar George Horowitz wrote: "This chain of traditional ordination broke down completely after the rebellion of Bar Kokeba and the consequent persecutions by the Roman emperor Hadrian (*c.* 135 A.D.). The Rabbis were compelled, therefore, in order to preserve the Torah and to maintain law and order, to enlarge the authority of Rabbinical tribunals. This they accomplished by emphasizing the distinction between Biblical penalties and Rabbinical penalties. Rabbinical courts after the second century had no authority to impose Biblical punishments since they lacked *semikah*; but as

19. Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, III:V.

20. Herbert Danby, "Introduction," *The Mishnah* (New York: Oxford University Press, [1933] 1987), p. xiii.

regards penalties created by Rabbinical legislation, the Rabbis had of necessity, the widest powers of enforcement. They instituted, accordingly, a whole series of sanctions and penalties: excommunication, fines, physical punishment, use of the 'secular arm' in imitation of the Church, etc."[21] This led to a restructuring of sanctions within the Jewish community, and it also led to the creation of a ghetto culture. They needed to separate themselves from the gentile culture in order to have the authority to impose the sanctions of what later became known as Talmudic law.[22] They became strangers in other lands.

G. The Replacement of the Promised Land

The kingdom of God cannot be confined geographically in New Testament times. Any nation can lawfully covenant with God today.[23] Israel was the single covenanted nation of Old Testament, which alone acknowledged the sanctions of God and the revealed law of God, and which alone required circumcision of all its male citizens. Only one other nation briefly covenanted under God, Assyria (under Jonah's preaching), but this covenant was soon broken.[24] Today, however, there is no monopoly of the Promised Land. All nations are required by God to covenant with Him.[25] Their law structures are supposed to be biblical. They are to turn to the whole Bible in search of civil laws and civil sanctions.

In today's world, the various covenanted lands replace the Old Testament's land of promise. The Promised Land's covenanted status has come to the nations. It becomes a sanctuary by means of the national covenant. Covenant Land legal status becomes a universal promise to all nations rather than a restricted promise to one nation. Where the preaching of the gospel is, there we find a nation being asked to become judicially holy ground. The gospel has universalized the promises of God.

The whole earth has been judicially cleansed by the death and

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21. George Horowitz, *The Spirit of Jewish Law* (New York: Central Book Co., [1953] 1973), p. 93.

22. On the Talmud, see North, *Authority and Dominion*, Appendix H.

23. Gary DeMar, *Ruler of the Nations: Biblical Blueprints for Government* (Ft. Worth, Texas: Dominion Press, 1987).

24. This seems to have been a common grace covenanting process—formal public obedience to the outward civil laws of the Bible—since there were no covenantal heirs remaining at the time of Assyria's conquest of Israel. Also, there is no indication that they were circumcised as part of their national repentance.

25. Kenneth L. Gentry, Jr., *The Greatness of the Great Commission: The Christian Enterprise in a Fallen World* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1990), ch. 10.

resurrection of Jesus Christ. The geographical boundaries between sacred and common have moved from national boundaries to ecclesiastical boundaries: the New Testament equivalent of the covenantally sacred space of the temple after the exile. There are sacred (i.e., *sacramental*) ecclesiastical acts—holy baptism and holy communion—but no sacred civil space. We no longer reside in sacred space. We no longer measure men's distance from God's kingdom by means of geography. We measure it by their church membership: personal confession, ethical behavior, and judicial subordination. The land of a covenanted nation is no longer God's covenantal agent, except in the sense that it is the place to which men's bodies return after death. The land has always been a covenantal agent in this general sense in the post-Fall era (Gen. 3:19). But in the sense of *an agent with a jurisdictional boundary*, land is no longer a covenantal agent.

The land of Israel ceased to be an agent of vomiting when the Old Covenant ended in A.D. 70. After A.D. 70, earthquakes and other geographical phenomena ceased to be relevant covenantally within Palestine, i.e., ceased to be predictable in terms of corporate ethics. This is not to say that earthquakes, like any other kind of disaster, are not signs of God's wrath in general against mankind in general, but there is very little biblical evidence that earthquakes are still part of God's *predictable* covenantal sanctions in history. Jesus is now the agent of judgment, seated on the throne beside God. The geological land of Israel is no longer an instrument for separating covenant-breakers from covenant-keepers. While nations can lawfully covenant with God in the New Testament order, the lands so constituted judicially are not part of the Abrahamic promise, a promise geographically limited to what Abraham could see and walk through (Gen. 13:15–17). Thus, it is fruitless to search the historical records of earthquakes in covenant-keeping nations and covenant-breaking nations in the expectation that a predictable pattern will be discovered.[26]

If I am incorrect about this, then the land still mediates between God and man. We do have such a case in the Old Testament: Cain's curse. "When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in

26. One earthquake that struck a sin center was the 1994 southern California earthquake, which centered in the Canoga Park-Chatsworth area. This was the center for pornographic movie production in the United States. Models who appear in such movies temporarily became less enthusiastic about their work, according to one agent for these performers. "It's put the fear of God into them." *Christianity Today* (March 7, 1994), p. 57.

the earth" (Gen. 4:12). This was a sanction against Cain, whose brother's blood had penetrated the land and testified against Cain (Gen. 4:10). The promised sanction was not active but rather negative: the absence of positive sanctions. The curse in Genesis 4 was agricultural: the land would no longer yield its fruit to Cain. So, Cain built a city (Gen. 4:17). He had been a tiller of the soil; he became a resident of a city. He was not threatened with an earthquake; he was threatened with personal famine. He avoided personal famine by building a city and becoming a trader or other non-agricultural producer. He escaped the curse of the ground by switching occupations and residency: rural to urban.

Cain's curse did not speak of earthquakes: the active stone-casting that the land later brought against Israel at the close of the Old Covenant order in A.D. 70. While I believe that God will reveal to covenant-keeping societies techniques that minimize the effects of earthquakes, I do not believe that He will predictably alter their number and intensity in relation to the degree of the societies' obedience to His law.

The last great wave of such covenantal speculation took place in the aftermath of the Lisbon earthquake of 1755.[27] When rational men concluded that they could make no ethical sense of that momentous event, they ceased searching for such covenantal connections in history. Their initial error in expecting to find specific ethical relevance in the 1755 earthquake led to a rejection of a covenantal worldview in general, a rejection that enhanced the universal triumph of Newtonian rationalism in the late eighteenth century.[28] If earthquakes are irrelevant covenantally, rational men concluded, then so are all the other natural disasters of life, which is why we call them *natural* disasters. This was also Solomon's conclusion in the midst of his existential period: "All things come alike to all: there is one event to the righteous, and to the wicked; to the good and to the clean, and to the unclean; to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not: as is the good, so is the sinner; and he that sweareth, as he that feareth an oath" (Eccl. 9:2). What we should affirm is this: *the arena of God's predictable historical sanctions has moved from geography to society.*

Let me give an example of this move from geography to society. Jesus announced that God does not send more or less rain on a society in terms of its theology or its ethical standards. On the contrary, God

27. T. D. Kendrick, *The Lisbon Earthquake* (Philadelphia: Lippencott, 1956).

28. Voltaire included a section on the Lisbon earthquake in *Candide*.

"maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust" (Matt. 5:45b).[29] The positive effects and negative effects of sun and rain fall indiscriminately on the righteous and the wicked. The positive effects of sun and rain are accentuated economically by societies that pursue God's law. Similarly, the negative effects of too much sun and too much rain are minimized in societies that pursue God's law. I believe that Matthew 5:45 is a statement regarding God's general laws of covenantal cause and effect; the statement applies to earthquakes as well as to sun and rain. In other words, people who build homes in flood plains or on top of major seismic faults will not see their property protected from the effects of flooding or earthquakes merely because they pray a lot or give money to the poor. The best they can legitimately expect from God is better information about controlling floods or better construction methods that resist Richter-7 quakes. Increased percentages of adultery will not produce increased percentages of Richter-9 quakes.[30]

Conclusion

Under the Mosaic Covenant, God dwelt in Israel in a unique way. As men approached God's earthly throne room, they approached holy ground. The extreme edges of this series of concentric holy boundaries were the nation's geographical boundaries. The land of Israel therefore acted as God's covenantal agent. In the New Covenant era, there is no holy ground separate from common ground. We do not take our shoes off when we enter a church, as God required of Moses when he stood on holy ground (Ex. 3:5), and as some Eastern religions and Islam require. We do not have ritual foot washings. The land of the New Covenant no longer serves as a covenantal agent. It no longer brings predictable sanctions in history. It is no longer tied covenantally to military affairs.

Leviticus 18 establishes the family as a unique covenantal institution, and protects it by civil law. The sanction associated with the violation of these requirements was to be cut off from the people. This means *a cutting off from the covenant*, which in turn means *excommuni-*

29. Gary North, *Priorities and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Matthew*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2000], 2012), ch. 10.

30. The Gutenberg-Richter law of earthquakes informs us that, worldwide, in any time period, as the magnitude of earthquakes increases, their probability decreases by a constant factor. This law is a member of a class of laws called power (exponent) laws. This law is good news for Westminster Seminary (West), which is located on an earthquake fault in a region of the world noted for its adultery.

cation. This excommunication was not merely ecclesiastical but also civil and familial. A person moved from being either a covenanted Israelite or a resident alien, and he became the legal equivalent of a foreigner who was in the land for purposes of trade. Covenant-breaking foreigners were permanently expelled from the nation.

Prior to the exile period, the land was spoken of in terms of its covenantal position as God's representing and represented agent. The land was represented by man, but it also represented God when it came time for God to bring His negative sanctions against covenantally rebellious residents inside the land's boundaries. The Promised Land was analogous to God in the sense that it is said to vomit the nations out of the land, just as God is also said to be the one who drives the nations out of the land.

In the New Testament, we no longer legitimately speak of the land's vomiting out its inhabitants. Instead, we read of the kingdom and its worldwide expansion. Because the self-consciousness and consistency of the individual is supposed to be greater under the New Covenant than under the Old, the New Testament does not speak of the land as analogous to both God and man. We read instead of the sword of the Lord, meaning the word of God that proceeds out of the mouth of God. "And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God" (Rev. 19:15).

One reason why the land is no longer spoken of as vomiting out its inhabitants is that the progress of the gospel is no longer conducted by means of military conquest. There is no longer a God-sanctioned system for covenant-keeping people to replace covenant-breaking people by means of expulsion. Today, they replace covenant-breakers through performance and productivity. They are to replace them in positions of cultural and political leadership—not by force but by performance.

Covenant-keepers are also to conquer covenant-breakers by means of preaching. Men are to brought into the "Promised Land" today by bringing them into the church, and then by bringing the whole nation under the biblical civil covenant through a democratic vote. This does not equate the visible church with the Promised Land, but it acknowledges that the kingdom of God is primarily manifested in history by the church, and all those who profess to be Christians are supposed to be members of the church. Thus, the land is not the pri-

mary agent of enforcement; Jesus Christ is. By purifying the church, He enables His people to purify themselves and to begin the conquest of the earth by means of the preaching of the gospel. He draws men to Himself rather than casting them out of the land. He does not need to remove covenant-breakers from the land in order to make room for His people. Instead, *the kingdom of God is the Promised Land*, in history and eternity, and by preaching the gospel, we invite all men to enter into that Promised Land. Ultimately, it is the goal of Christianity to bring the whole earth under the dominion of Christ.[31] This means that it would do no good for the land to vomit the inhabitants out because, ultimately, there is no contiguous land to vomit them into. The New Covenant's strategy is *conquest by conversion* rather than conquest by destruction and expulsion.

31. Kenneth L. Gentry, Jr., *He Shall Have Dominion: A Postmillennial Eschatology*, 2nd ed. (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1997).